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THE
TRAGEDY
OF THE
DESERTED
ISLE

WARREN WOOD

GIFT OF

Class of 1900.



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The Old Well.

The Tragedy of the Deserted Isle

A CHRONICLE OF THE
Burr and Blennerhassett Conspiracy

By
WARREN WOOD

"Truth is stranger than fiction"



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TO THE
LIBRARY

TO
THE MEMORY OF
LEVI WOOD

A SOLDIER OF THE WAR OF 1812

AND CONTEMPORARY WITH THE CHARACTERS
OF THIS STORY

Although a "Green Mountain boy," he early removed to the "Empire State," the scene of its leading actor's political triumphs and desperate downfall. Like him, he turned his face westward, passing the Alleghanies, halting for a time in what was then Virginia, and afterward crossing the Ohio river. Unlike him, he never achieved civic or military renown, and died without a blot on his 'scutcheon, leaving only to his posterity the heritage of an unsullied honor and an untarnished name.

His ashes rest among the West Virginia hills.

Requiescat in pace

258042

Foreword

Much has been written regarding what is sometimes known as the Burr and Blennerhassett Conspiracy. For the greater part of a century this episode has been a favorite theme for both novelist and historian, and there is already extant quite an extensive literature on the subject. However, no apology is made for offering an additional volume. Not because the author can lay claim — as the manner of some is — to having unearthed any forgotten manuscript or discovered any new material relating to the matter, worthy of mention.

But, since boyhood, this drama of the wilderness has appealed to us with a strange romantic interest; and we have here tried to deal with the characters, events and scenes connected with the tragedy — for it is nothing less — in the spirit that the theme and its setting would seem to warrant. In attempting this, many intricate mazes have been traversed, and many tangled skeins unraveled, that what is set down may be found trustworthy.

One other thing. We have endeavored to be just toward Aaron Burr, the prime mover and dominating genius of the whole affair, who has had hard measure at the hand of friend as well as enemy. When there has been room for reasonable doubt, he has been given the benefit; this, and nothing more.

W. W.

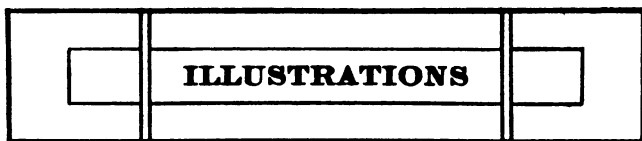
Ravenswood-on-the-Ohio

*« For us and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. »*

HAMLET. Act 3; Sc. 3.

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The Tragedy of the Deserted Isle

PROLOGUE

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a village of unpretentious appearance crowning the low point that marks the confluence of the Little Kanawha River with the Ohio, where the city of Parkersburg now stands. It consisted of a few straggling cabins of frontier design and construction; a block house of conventional pattern, always in evidence in these outlying settlements; a jail with its insignia of dark-aged justice, known as "stocks and pillory," and last, but not least, a log court-house that gave name and prestige to this outpost of the Western world.

It was in accordance with the time and place that the village should take on the name, as many other seats of justice this side the mountains have since likewise done, of its leading feature of local pride, and thus press its claim for municipal distinction. So it came about that the borough laid out by John Stokely, on land preempted by Robert Thornton, by right of tomahawk entry, and christened by the threadworn title of Newport, was honored with a more distinctive appellation. Letters directed to, and from the "point" between the rivers bore the postmark, "Wood County Court House, Virginia." Con-

temporaneous records also indicate that this was a semi-official title; although it was more commonly called "The Point," the name by which it had been known before it was selected as the county seat.

The court house stood where the Ohio River Railroad Station is now located, where, like a sentinel keeping watch above the rippling rivers, it raised its head in stern, uncompromising primitiveness. To the hamlet, it was a badge of superiority; to the traveler, a landmark of civilization; to all, and sundry, a rugged temple of justice of the great commonwealth of Virginia.

The location of so considerable an evidence of frontier enlightenment had been a matter of no small concern to the settlement, and had been accomplished with no little difficulty on the part of its representatives. They had wrestled long and heroically with the problem, during many protracted sessions of the County Court; had fixed the location at Neal's Station, a mile's distance up the Kanawha; had convened their honorable body on the lands of Isaac Williams, opposite Marietta, where the court house had been ordered to be built, and where now stands the town which bears his name. Here they were as much at sea as ever. It was decreed that this was not to be their abiding city. Again they adjourned; and the next day found them sitting in regular session, with a full bench, in the cabin of Hugh Phelps, where

the question of locating the seat of justice had arisen during their first excises, some two and a half years before.

There was much that could be said, no doubt much that was said, in favor of all the sites selected; but there seemed to be only one place in all that region that effectually appealed to the higher wisdom of these sturdy statesmen, who like Romulus and Remus, on the hills by the Tiber, patiently waited the supreme moment of final decision. At last it became evident that the crisis was past—harmony of action finally prevailed, and, before the sun went down, "It was unanimously agreed that the point above the mouth of the little Kanawha River, at the union of said Kanawha and Ohio Rivers, on the lands owned by John Stokely, is the proper place for the seat of justice; and it is accordingly ordered that the necessary public buildings be erected thereon, and that we will support the above order, and never raise any legal objection to the same." Then they adjourned, "to meet at the point at the upper side of the Little Kanawha, where a block house had been built." And that night, as they sat around the logs that blazed on their ample hearth-stones, they told to eager listeners the story of locating this forgotten landmark.

These builders of a municipality realized, as well as we, that their work had been well done; that their ability to cope with the weightier matters of their

generation had been demonstrated; that "wisdom is justified of all her children." They could not foresee, however, that the decision rendered in the cabin of their fellow pioneer would largely determine the respective status of two neighboring cities in adjoining commonwealths; and contribute no inconsiderable part in maintaining the equilibrium of trade along the shores of the river that rolls between. Neither did they see the insignificance of the building they were erecting when compared with the ample proportions, and more modern architecture of the one which was to follow; still less did they dream of the present magnificent pile of masonry, with its fretted columns and uplifting turrets, of which it was to be the legitimate forerunner. What they did behold, as the great logs were hoisted in place, and the strong walls rose in silent majesty, was a temple, humble in outline, but none less sacred to the goddess whose ears are deaf to entreaty; whose eyes are blinded to pity; whose lips are closed to mercy; whose hand with unfaltering touch, and scale that knows no turning, deals out to saint and sinner their portion in due season.

About it lay an environment, rich with the promise of future greatness; above it vaulted a sky of proverbial brightness; while from their coign of vantage at the meeting-place of the rivers, they caught a vision of the waters, widening and shining, as they hastened with the message down to the sea, and they were content.

CHAPTER I

AN ISLAND PARADISE

LATE in the afternoon of May 5th, 1805, there might have been seen a solitary boat floating leisurely past the log Court House, down the Ohio. It was a kind of non-descript cross between the pirogue of the Frenchman that ruffled this river fifty years before, and the smaller-sized steamboat of the American, that plowed its waters a few years later. From the shore, it appeared to be about sixty feet long, and, probably, one-fourth as wide. There were glass windows in the sides, and it was covered with a roof that served as a protection in time of storm, and a promenade in fair weather. All in all, it was rough but substantial, harmonizing with the architecture along shore. It had no sails; and, as steam was not yet utilized as a propelling power in navigation, it gently drifted with the current, which, at this season of the year, is accelerated by the freshets that swell the tributaries along its course, and flood the head waters in the mountain region, where the river is born. Craft of this size were usually manned by

three or four boatmen, who cleared them of snags and other obstructions; directed their course by means of long spiked poles, occasionally with an oar, and in many other ways made themselves useful, as became honest rivermen.

Besides the crew, there were but two passengers aboard the boat in question; although its suite of apartments, consisting of dining-room, kitchen, and two bed-rooms, would have afforded ample accommodation for a much larger party. Outwardly, there was little in the appearance of their ark to attract the attention of the loungers about the Court House, but there was much in the landscape to interest the occupants aboard. Nature was just awakening from the embrace of a long, dreary winter, and the spring-tides of life were surging in earth, air, and water, with pulsings that touched, and quickened the beholders. Along the southern shore, loomed the picturesque hills of Virginia, covered and crowned with the forest that was budding and bursting into beauty. Many trees were already dense with their foliage of living green; while here and there were clustered groups of flowering dogwoods, their snowy masses contrasting sharply with the crimson glow of the red-bud, and the somber tints of the tapering pines. Great trees grew to the very brink of the Kanawha; hiding

it in the darkness of their primeval shadows, and shielding from prying eyes the playful freaks of silver-scaled perch and pike, that sported unmolested in its murky waters.

To the East, the woods hedged in the pioneer county-town, and then rose with the back-ground, where the deer and the bear found a haunt on the hill. Here the call of wild turkey, and the bay of hound broke the prolonged silences by day; and the plaintive cry of the panther, and dismal howl of the wolf awoke its sleeping echoes in the night-time. On the wide bottoms across the Ohio, lay the busy settlement of Belpre, where the veterans from New England were clearing farms, building houses, planting orchards, and enjoying the liberty for which they fought during the dark days of the Revolution. While away over the misty, purpling hills of Ohio, stretched the all-embracing forest, like a great, green-tinted sea, billowy and boundless.

Turning in the direction they were drifting, the voyagers beheld, rising in mid-stream, what appeared to be one of the mythical "Isles of the Blest," which like a mirage from some unsubstantial cloudland, slumbered on the bosom of the "Beautiful River." They were now midway between it and the "Point" they had left a mile behind, and opposite where it

might have been sighted, had they been looking this way. As their boat glided noiselessly on, the magical isle seemed to lift its graceful outlines with a gentle, illusive movement in the direction from which they were approaching. Gradually, as they drew nearer, its ethereal forms began to assume more tangible proportions. Through the interstices of the trees in the foreground, they could now catch varying glimpses of a great fan-shaped lawn beyond, its segment formed by the border of parting waters, and swelling inland into a gently sloping knoll, on which stood a large, winged mansion, of snowy whiteness. Drifting with the right-hand current, the boat was deftly guided to the shore until it reached a pier, flanked with massive pillars, and with wide, stone steps rising from the water. Here the boatmen made fast the ark to the mooring, and the travelers, eagerly leaping ashore, proceeded to explore the island.

One of them would have attracted attention anywhere, and a practiced eye was not required to determine that he was a man of indomitable force and action. His figure, slight and sinewy, was heightened by an unmistakable air of superiority; his bearing was distinguished, and every movement marked by military precision. His features were clear-cut and handsome: the forehead, wide, high, and slightly

receding; nose, large, with dilating nostrils; chin determined; lips, delicately curved. A striking, impassive face, but withal cheerful and kindly; its stern quality being relieved by a pair of brilliant, black eyes, set wide under arching brows—eyes of unfathomable depth, and ever changing beauty—now kindling with a strange, sparkling fire; now glowing with a tender, mysterious light; always exerting upon the beholder, a charm, at once indefinable, and compelling. There was only one pair of such eyes in that generation, and they belonged to—Aaron Burr. For this was none other than he, who but a month ago, as Vice-President, presided over the Senate of the United States. His hair was brushed back under a hat of the prevailing pattern, powdered, and tied in a queue behind; his dress was of the fashionable cut of the time: blue coat, with high collar, and wide, easy lapels; buff waistcoat; faultless linen; dark knee-breeches, and neat-fitting boots, of fine leather.

His traveling companion was Gabriel Shaw, who had accompanied him from Philadelphia, and was now en route on some business down the river. But with Mr. Shaw and his errand we have no especial concern; not so, however, with Colonel Burr. We are already asking, "What has brought him to this out-of-the-way paradise of the West? Why does he

seek an interview with the master of this island realm? On what mission is he bent down this romantic river?"

The two visitors strolled along a graveled drive toward the mansion, which stood facing up the river, with an unobstructed view, except for the trees, toward all points of the compass. It was of peculiar design, and although its contour may have violated some of the accepted canons of architecture, yet it certainly harmonized with the uniqueness of its surroundings. It was built of wood, and its most striking features appear to have been copied from the south front of the Washington mansion at Mount Vernon. The main building was fifty-two feet long, thirty feet wide, and two stories high. A portico extended across the front, and thence, on either side, in circular wings, forty feet long, and one story high. These connected two-story buildings, on the north and south, twenty-six feet in length, and twenty feet deep, with the main building. A line uniting the tips of this crescent, exclusive of the circular corridors would have measured one hundred and four feet.

The grounds were laid out in English style, giving evidence of culture foreign to these wilds. Graveled walks led among flower-bordered grass-plats, adorned with tasteful shrubbery. There were rustic arbors, hedges of hawthorn, and wide spaces of greensward,

stretching away toward a border of shadowy maples, silvered sycamores, dense cottonwoods, and dark water-elms, resting like a crest on the head of the island. Trees, adjoining the wings of the mansion, assisted in intercepting the sight of the slave-cabins, stables, and other outbuildings. In the rear of the house the same taste was displayed in the arrangement of the espaliers of fruit, beautiful bowers, and labyrinthine walks, that had been evidenced in the foreground. On the west was a vegetable garden, joining an orchard of many varieties, young, thrifty, and full of promise; and this, in turn, was succeeded by fertile grain-fields beyond.

Aaron Burr examined this rare gem of the Ohio with the critical eye of a connoisseur. He was not devoid of a keen appreciation of the beautiful, but his analytical mind was long accustomed to measure things as well as men with a certain utilitarian standard wholly his own. What estimate did he place upon this princely domain? What reflections were awakened as he surveyed its varied points of interest? Perhaps he was comparing it with "Richmond Hill," with its secluded groves and wealth of cedars, looking down upon the Hudson, stately and silent, as last he left it; or it may be he was thinking of the scenes of his former triumphs and failures, and indulging a vain

regret for "what might have been"; or could he have been dreaming of a wider realm, with its marble halls, its splendid retinues, its golden treasures?

Alas! we cannot tell. All that we know is that he gracefully accepted an invitation, on the part of himself and his friend, to share the hospitality of the mansion, and that a very pleasant evening was spent within its precincts. Accustomed as he was to the best afforded by the assembly halls and drawing-rooms of the East, he had nowhere witnessed evidences of higher culture, or more refined and luxurious surroundings than he found on this far-outlying island on the Ohio. The courtliness of its Master's manner, and exquisite elegance with which its Mistress served refreshment, was only matched by the brilliant conversation and polished address of their distinguished visitor. The discourse although engaging was of a general character, their repast being enlivened by various incidents of the journey, and occurring events of the outside world.

It was with apparent reluctance that the travelers, at a late hour, took leave of their amiable host and his accomplished wife, and again embarking, proceeded through the darkness on their way down the river. The lights faded out from the "point," where stood the log Court House above the Kanawha; again the wild

cries echoed from the forest on the far-off hills, and once more the Island sank to slumber to the crooning of its caressing waters.

CHAPTER II

A BIT OF HISTORY

THE year 1800 marks the beginning of an epoch in the political annals of the United States. The nation was still in its infancy, with untried conditions confronting it. There were problems to be solved, and questions to be settled that never before had arisen in the history of the world. To meet these conditions, to solve these problems, to deal with these questions, were the avowed declarations of the two parties, which, by this time, had come into existence by a natural process of political evolution.

During the first National Congress, party lines had not been very definitely drawn; but before the second Presidential election, in 1792, there were arrayed, in well defined outlines, two organized political parties. One of these was the Federal party, that had arisen as the advocate of the Constitution of 1787, and, after its adoption had, by the law of the "survival of the fittest," projected itself as a leading factor into national politics. The other party was the legitimate successor of the old Anti-Federalists; its members, up to Monroe's administration, were commonly known as Republicans,

since then, Democrats. Alexander Hamilton, who advocated a strong, centralized government, was the acknowledged leader of the Federalists; while Thomas Jefferson, who maintained the love of individual liberty, was recognized as the dominating head of the Republican, or Democratic party.

The Federal party had for some years comparatively clear sailing. It was the preference of Washington, who, on account of his decorous attitude toward both parties, was sometimes called a no-party man. It had a majority in Congress during his administration. It elected John Adams President in 1796; but the passage of the Alien and Sedition Laws during his administration; its policy toward France, and its general centralising tendency, resulted in the downfall of the party, and the ascendancy of the Republicans, in 1800. The autumn of that year witnessed a most exciting campaign. In these days, we are subject to a quadrennial recurrence of unnecessary noise and uncalled for display. Yet we, who have only known the friendly contests of later years, can have but little conception of the bitterness, the rancor, the vindictiveness, manifested by the politicians of that time. To enter the political arena then, was to court slander, abuse, vituperation, and, often, personal encounter with pistols, at ten paces.

Previous to 1800, Presidential candidates had been agreed upon by common consent. That year, they were selected by a caucus of the leaders of their respective parties. The Republicans decided upon Thomas Jefferson for President, and Aaron Burr for Vice-President; while the Federalists chose John Adams and C. C. Pinckney as their candidates. Owing to the inadequate means of communication, the result was long in doubt. On February 11th, the day appointed by law for counting the votes, both houses met in the Senate Chamber, where the Vice-President opened the certificates of the electors of the different states; and the votes being read and counted, the following result was announced: for Thomas Jefferson seventy-three votes, Aaron Burr seventy-three, John Adams sixty-five, C. C. Pinckney sixty-four, John Jay one.

The Republicans, of course, had intended in voting to elect Jefferson President and Burr Vice-President. But under the Constitution, as it then stood, the candidate having the largest number of electoral votes was made President, and the one that stood second, Vice-President. As Jefferson and Burr each had an equal number, neither was elected; but each had an equal right for consideration, and it devolved upon the House of Representatives to make the choice. The

result was a disappointment to both parties. The people were wildly excited; the politicians stimulated to increased activity, and Aaron Burr thrust into national prominence as a presidential possibility.

The Federalists had a majority in the House; and being irritated to the highest degree on account of the unexpected turn affairs had taken, and believing that Burr's attitude toward their policy would be less hostile than Jefferson's, which was known and decided, determined to checkmate and disappoint the Republicans by electing Burr. It is said that if a simple majority of the members would have sufficed, he would certainly have been elected on the first ballot; but the fact that a majority of the states was necessary to a choice, considerably complicated the matter. The House consisted of one hundred and six members from sixteen states, and in voting for President they voted by states, as the old Congress had done before them. It followed, therefore, that the rights of the smallest state and the largest were equal. On the first ballot, eight states voted for Jefferson, six for Burr, with Vermont and Maryland equally divided between them. And so it continued all the day, and at short intervals throughout the night.

The sessions were held in the old Hall of Representatives, now the National Statuary Hall. Many

dramatic scenes have occurred in that historic chamber, but none other like this was ever witnessed. The galleries were vacant, the public being excluded; but on the floor of the House, seats had been arranged for the President and Senators, while reclining on sofas that had been put in place for their accommodation, were the members who were sick at the time. One gentleman, who was seriously ill, was ministered to by his good wife who was in attendance. Here and there flitted noiseless figures, clad in the stylish dress of the time, and occasional little knots of twos and threes were gathered in different parts of the Hall, discussing in earnest undertones the questions demanding solution. It was a crisis, the outcome of which was as uncertain as its occurrence had been unexpected.

Sometimes a strange quiet would fall upon the House, like the oppressive stillness that precedes the break of a storm, as the members, with sharpened ears and bated breath, would listen to the Speaker's announcement of the ballot that had been taken. This over, the sullen mutterings of the impending tempest would again break out with increased intensity. The flickering lights that played on the marbled background brought out in bold relief the forms of statesmen—baffled and baffling—revealing faces animated with courage, or flushed with excitement; some

haggard with suffering or worn by watching; all wearing a look of dogged determination, portentous of a struggle prolonged and bitter.

Against noon the following day, twenty-nine ballots had been taken without the slightest prospect of change. Before proceeding to business the day previous, the House had resolved not to adjourn until they had determined upon a choice. But now, exhausted by the strain, worn out with watching, and with the end no nearer in view than when they began, they concluded to evade their resolution by taking a recess until the next day. During this intermission, Judge William Cooper of New York—father of James Fenimore Cooper—took occasion to send his friend Thomas Morris the following message: "We have postponed until tomorrow 11 o'clock, the voting for President. All stand firm. Jefferson eight—Burr six—divided two. Had Burr done anything for himself, he would long ere this have been President. If a majority would answer, he would have it on every vote."

On February 15th Jefferson wrote to James Monroe as follows: "If the Federalists could have been permitted to pass a law for putting the government into the hands of an officer, they would certainly have prevented an election. But we thought it best to declare, one and all, openly and firmly, that the day such an

act passed, the Middle States would arm; and that no such usurpation, even for a single day, should be submitted to. This first shook them; and they were completely alarmed at the resource for which we declared, namely, to reorganize the government, and to amend it."

Hamilton appears to have been wrought to a still higher pitch, as shown by a statement he afterward made in a letter to James A. Bayard. "It is believed to be an alarming fact," said he, "that while the question of the Presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives, parties were organizing in several of the cities, in the event of there being no election, to cut off the leading Federalists, and seize the government."

With tie and intrigue, the people were kept in feverish suspense for seven days, during which the excitement threatened to terminate seriously. Thirty-five ballots had been taken with precisely the same result as the first one. Had Burr, who far away at Albany was busily engaged with his duties as a member of the State Legislature, been willing to forfeit the confidence of his party by resorting to the support of the Federalists, the matter would have ended there; but, according to the sworn statement of the leaders of that party, he would make, and did make no concession.

During the contest, James A. Bayard, who held the vote of Delaware; General Morris of Vermont, who held the dividend vote of that state; Mr. Baer and Mr. Craik, who with Mr. Thomas and Mr. Dennis held the divided vote of Maryland, entered into a solemn compact to act together. As Jefferson wanted only the vote of one state, either of the gentlemen mentioned could at any moment have terminated the controversy. Those acting with Bayard, however, agreed to leave it to him to fix the time when the opposition should end, and to make terms, if any could be agreed upon, with the friends of Jefferson. Before the thirty-sixth ballot was taken, these friends were authorized to say, that if Mr. Jefferson were elected, no change would be made regarding commerce, the navy, or the public debt, and that subordinate officers would not be removed on account of their political character, nor without complaint against their conduct. Mr. Bayard, having ascertained that Burr would not commit himself, and having agreed to withdraw his opposition if the foregoing points were conceded, now declared his intention of voting for Jefferson. Immediately, all was clamor and discord in his camp. Several caucuses were held, but all alike broke up in confusion. At a general meeting of the party the next day, it was generally acceded that Burr could not be elected;

but some thought it better to persist, and to go without a President rather than to elect Jefferson. The greater number, however, decided to terminate the contest and choose a President. At a final meeting, called by Bayard, the matter was arranged a few minutes before the ballot was taken. General Morris, of Vermont, absented himself, and two members from Maryland voted blank, thus giving Jefferson a majority of the states, while the Vice-Presidency fell to Burr.

The great struggle was over, and the country breathed freely once more. The noise of political strife for a time died away, to be succeeded by rejoicing throughout the land. A new regime had been established, and the dynasty that was to wield the scepter for nearly a quarter of a century, was everywhere hailed with acclamations of joy.

CHAPTER III

CONCERNING AARON BURE

AARON BURE had reached the summit of his career. He stood but one step below the highest place within the gift of the nation. Adams and Jefferson, who had preceded him, had mounted to this position, and it seemed the natural and logical course that he should follow in their footsteps; but from this honor, a cruel fate had debarred him. He had now come to the parting of the ways. Up to this time his course, with unvarying certainty, had been steadily upward. From this time forward, he was swept impetuously—may it not be said—irresistibly downward. Whether he was marked by fate as an offering to the evil genius that fires the vaulting ambitions of men; or whether he deliberately chose the path that leads to the lower levels of life is one of the baffling enigmas that history proposes for our solution.

The child of an illustrious ancestry; endowed with a heritage of personal charm, and the gift of a brilliant intellect, his horoscope should have been drawn in virile strength and heroic outline. His father, the

Rev. Aaron Burr, first president and real founder of Princeton College, was of Germanic extraction, and could trace his lineage back to noble blood in the Fatherland. In the veins of his mother, Esther, the daughter of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, the most noted divine of his age, and second president of Princeton, were traces of a current running back in direct line to England's great ruler, Alfred the Great.

His father was a man of importance in his day; a finished scholar, and an eloquent preacher, but of somewhat eccentric character. His mother was a lovely, gentle woman, with an intensely pious temperament. Their only son was born in the parsonage of the Presbyterian Church, Newark, New Jersey, on Feb. 6, 1756. There was one other child, a little sister Sarah, who became the wife of Judge Tappan Reeve, of Connecticut.

From the private journal of his mother, we learn that at thirteen months old, "Aaron is a little, dirty, noisy boy, very different from Sally, almost in everything. He begins to talk a little; is sly and mischievous. He has more sprightliness than Sally, and most say he is handsome, but not so good tempered. He is very resolute, and requires a good governor to bring him to terms."

Before he was three years old, little Aaron had the

misfortune to lose his father, mother, and grandparents. Orphaned and helpless, he and his sister were taken to the home of his mother's eldest brother, Hon. Timothy Edwards. His uncle was a Puritan of the "straightest sect," stern and unyielding, whose formula for bringing up the young might have been reduced to a single term, repression. This to Aaron, who was high spirited and impetuous, was understood to mean "oppression." The result was frequent clashings of the authority of the uncle and the insubordination of the nephew; sometimes ending, as the latter expressed it, in his being "licked like a sack."

His independent spirit chafed under his guardian's grievous restrictions; though in after years, he spoke feelingly of the kindness hidden under his uncle's outward austerity. Like Washington, he took a boyish fancy to a sea-going life, and, at the age of ten, ran away to New York, and shipped as a cabin-boy on an out-bound vessel. Before sailing, he was discovered by his uncle Timothy; but that gentleman no sooner made his appearance than his nimble nephew bounded up the rigging like a squirrel. His uncle first demanded an unconditional surrender; but from his lofty perch at the masthead, young Aaron's diplomacy enabled him to treat on more favorable terms.

His father had left him an ample estate, of which his uncle made liberal use in his education. An excellent tutor was secured, and he is spoken of at this time as "learning bravely." This was the other side of his nature. He was a precocious child, and when eleven years old was prepared to enter college, but was not permitted that privilege until two years later; being refused, as he said, "on account of his years and inches." During the interim, he mastered the studies of the first two college years at home, and, upon examination, was found to be qualified to enter the junior class, but was chagrined to learn that he was again debarred by reason of his size and age. He was, however, permitted as a special favor to enter the sophomore class. During his first year in college he studied from sixteen to eighteen hours a day. He even cultivated the habit of eating sparingly, that he might better apply himself. When the examinations were over, he found himself so far ahead of his class that he relaxed his accustomed application, and went to the other extreme by dissipating his energy in desultory reading.

Although undersized and delicate, he is described as a fair, handsome boy, with beautiful black eyes and graceful manners. At the age of sixteen he was graduated with distinction from Princeton College.

During his last year in school, there occurred a great religious revival, and young Burr's friends importuned him to forsake the pleasures of youth, and enter upon a religious life. He admitted being interested, but after an investigation of some months under Dr. Joseph Bellamy, an eminent theologian and friend of his father, he came to the conclusion, as he expressed it, "that the road to Heaven was open to all alike." From this, he drifted into the ultra-tinted sea of agnosticism, but he always avoided religious discussion, and often expressed great reverence for the Bible. He became a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, adopting his system of ethics as the creed by which he lived and died.

The summer of 1774 found him in the home of his brother-in-law, Mr. Tappan Reeve, at Litchfield, Connecticut. Here he became a great favorite; alternating his time in studying law and flirting with the girls. From this pleasant occupation, he was awakened by the ominous guns of Lexington. The storm had burst at last, and he was not altogether unprepared. Having discerned the portents of the approaching struggle, he employed his leisure hours in ransacking history for descriptions of battles and sieges, and the achievements and strategies of the great warriors of ancient and modern times. His researches

not only confirmed his military ardor, but gave him a knowledge of tactics and discipline which afterwards proved of great value. Throwing his law-books aside, he and his friend Mathew Ogden hastened to join Washington's army at Cambridge, where they arrived in July, 1775, a few days after he had taken command.

Burr had formed high conceptions of the discipline of camps and armies, and was sadly disappointed at the scene presented. All was confusion and idleness. The officers were lax in their requirements; the men, ill-clad, poorly armed, and many sick. Weary and worn with inactivity, he fell into a nervous fever. One day as he lay fretting on his bed in one of the tents, he overheard Arnold's plan of invading Canada, and he at once determined on joining the expedition. Despite the remonstrances and entreaties of friends, he arose, and set about making his preparations for the journey. On the 20th of September, he sailed with the command, eleven hundred strong, from Newburyport. They proceeded as far as the mouth of the Kennebec in transports, where they were provided with batteaux for ascending the river.

It was opposite the present site of Augusta, Maine, that they began their wonderful march, an expedition that ranks with the famous "Retreat of the Ten Thousand." Before them rose the outline of an un-

broken forest, stretching away to the St. Lawrence; its desolate distances untouched by the hand of civilization; its gloomy solitudes unmarked by the footprints of any of their kind; but they did not hesitate. They were the representatives of a resistless race; a race to which the mountain barrier the rolling flood, and the frowning forest, has proved neither check nor hindrance. Leaving the last outpost of civilization behind, they plunged into the wilderness. It was the beginning of October, and the onset bore no portents of the hardships which were to follow. The weather was delightful; the blue haze of Indian summer rested on forest and river, and softened the shadows that fell across their pathway. Birds sang in the trees, and the expedition moved merrily forward.

No regular order was preserved; and Burr, who was fast regaining his usual vigor, in company with Ogden, Wilkinson, and others, strode on in advance of the boats. He was but twenty; slight in stature, and regarded as a mere stripling. But he was made of stern stuff; his was a courage that never faltered, and his adventurous spirit rose as he rushed on to destiny. Soon the rain began to fall, and the difficulties of the little army thickened, as they slowly worked their way through the wild woods. Their batteaux had to be hauled up the swollen river; piloted through foam-

ing rapids, and carried by main strength around tumbling falls. Not less than thirty times, they were compelled to unload their provisions and munitions, and haul the heavy boats around falls and rapids, or carry them on their shoulders across marshy portages, that were sometimes miles in width.

Burr, while at his uncle's at Elizabethtown, had been accustomed to take frequent aquatic excursions, and had thus become a skilled helmsman. This accomplishment now stood him in good play in passing the rapids. But one day he, along with others, was carried over a fall of nearly twenty feet. Much of the baggage was lost; one man was drowned, and Burr, chilled with cold, barely succeeded in reaching the shore.

After leaving the Kennebec, they pushed on through forest and fen; scrambling over rocks that cut their hands; struggling through swamps that poisoned them with fever; cutting through thickets that tore their clothes to tatters. On they pressed through toil and suffering! On, through sleet and snow! On, still on! through the dense shadows of the pathless forest. Late in October, they went into camp at the foot of a snow-capped mountain. Disaffection and desertion had depleted their numbers; fever and fatigue had prostrated many; misery and want had discouraged

others. The weather grew still colder; sickness increased; heavy rains set in; and again they were compelled to resume their journey.

Their flotilla, launched on Dead River, was soon overtaken by a violent flood. Battling with the torrents that rushed down from the mountains, some of their boats were capsized; others were dashed to pieces, and a large part of their precious provision was lost. Their situation now became desperate. The scanty rations soon gave out; and they were reduced to the verge of starvation, living on dogs, reptiles, roots, moccasins, bullet-pouches—anything affording the least sustenance. Burr's abstemious habits, acquired while in college enabled him to endure this privation better than any of his comrades. Many sank by the wayside exhausted; more deserted. The others struggled on through the blinding snow; gaunt with hunger; chilled by freezing water—past Lake Megantic—down the Chaudiere—until, on the 9th of November, they emerged, like famished specters, from the woods on Point Levi, in full view of the battlements of Quebec.

They had performed an act for all time! An unparalleled march through the wilderness! For thirty-two days, they saw neither habitation nor human kind. One-half of their number had fallen by the

way. Their achievement is one of the brightest pages in our country's history.

Through it all, Burr had borne himself like a veteran; the stripling had put the sturdy backwoodsmen to shame. His courage, endurance, and helpfulness had won the lasting regard and admiration of all his comrades. He had not only proved his right to be numbered with the "gallant six hundred," but had exhibited other qualities, that in the future were to be fully tested.

As they approached Quebec, it became evident that that their number was insufficient to overcome so formidable a stronghold. And so it was determined to dispatch a courier to Montgomery, who was already in possession of Montreal, to solicit his co-operation. At his own instance, Burr was chosen by Colonel Arnold as the messenger to bear the communication. The way lay through one hundred and twenty miles of the enemy's country; and the undertaking required not only courage, but tact and sagacity. It was known to Burr that the French inhabitants had never become reconciled to the treaty of 1763; and he reasoned that he could rely on the disaffection of the clergy to forward his undertaking. Donning the robe of a Catholic priest, he knocked at the gate of a convent not far from the camp, and was immediately

conducted to the superior in charge. With his mastery of the Latin, and some knowledge of French, he had little difficulty in communicating with the venerable father, who regarded him as a mere boy. Having secured his confidence, Burr revealed his identity, made known his plans, and solicited his aid in carrying out his mission. The white-haired priest did not attempt to conceal his astonishment, and tried to persuade the young adventurer to give up the undertaking. He spoke of his tender years, of the great distance, and the danger he incurred in attempting such a journey. Finding he could not dissuade him, he gave him a faithful description of the country, with letters to be used *en route*; furnished him with a guide, a sleigh, and a tough pony to pull it. Thus equipped, he passed from one religious house to another till he came to Three Rivers. Here he found the people alarmed by the rumors of Arnold's approach, and his guide refused to go farther until the excitement had subsided. For greater security, Burr was hidden in a convent; but at the expiration of three days his guide consented again to proceed, and they soon after set off, reaching Montreal without further incident or alarm. Upon arriving, Burr immediately proceeded to headquarters, and made his report. Montgomery was so pleased with his daring and address, and the manner

in which he had accomplished his mission, that he at once gave him a place on his staff, with the rank of Captain.

In the meantime, Arnold had crossed the river, and after making a feint upon the town withdrew his force twenty miles up the St. Lawrence to Point aux Trembles, where he awaited the arrival of Montgomery. He was here joined by the latter with three hundred men on the third of December. Upon Montgomery taking command, a council of war was held, and a plan of attack agreed upon. It was determined to assail the town by escalade, and Cape Diamond was selected as the main point of approach. One-third of their number were to storm the "lower town," and the remainder were to scale the bastion at Cape Diamond. The walls were high, and it was believed to be considered impregnable; hence the least resistance was to be expected in that quarter. Burr was present at the council, and at his own request was assigned a small force of forty men, whom he drilled till they could ascend the ladders he had ordered made, armed with all their military equipments, with the same facility they would mount an ordinary stairway. He spent the time at night reconnoitering in the vicinity of the rocky promontory, where the attack was to be made, and was sorely disappointed when the place

and plan, at the last moment, were abandoned.

Surmising that the garrison had received notice of their intentions, a new arrangement was agreed upon: Montgomery and Arnold were to lead the attacking parties against the lower town, while two feints were to be made on the upper town, one at St. John's Gate, and the other at Cape Diamond. It had been determined before that the assault should be made during a snow-storm, and at night. Small-pox was making fearful havoc among the troops; the weather was intensely cold, and the besiegers impatiently awaited a favorable conjunction of nature's forces.

The closing hours of 1775 were slowly winging their flight; the towering citadel, the beetling crags, and the ice-bound river were flooded with moonlight, when suddenly—at midnight—the sky became overcast; a driving snow-storm swept down, and the troops were ordered under arms. At two o'clock on the morning of the New Year about nine hundred men were on the march. Montgomery led the command through the darkness, along the rocky shore of the river. Defiling through the drifting snow; climbing over piles of ice, they reached a line of pickets, which they cut away, and pushed on till they came to a second stockade, that shielded a blockhouse in the rear. In attempt-

ing to pass this barrier, they were discovered by the guard, who fired at random, and then fled to the blockhouse, where a panic ensued, the entire garrison fleeing precipitately. Crowding through the breach they had made, the Americans struggled up the icy ascent, Montgomery leading. "Come on, my brave boys," he cried, "and Quebec is ours."

What momentous events sometimes hang upon the most trivial circumstances. How the veriest chance sometimes changes, not only the lives of men, the fate of armies, but even affects the destinies of nations. The assailants were somewhat delayed in climbing over the ice-floe, and a sailor, belonging to the beleaguered party, ventured back to ascertain the cause. Peering through a port-hole he saw the approaching column, and turned again to flee; but mustering courage, he faced about, and touched off one of the cannons, which was heavily loaded with grape-shot. His aimless act not only saved Quebec, but gave Canada again to the British, and, no doubt, changed the entire conduct of the Revolution.

The head of the column was within forty paces of the blockhouse, when, suddenly, there was a blinding flash, a terrific explosion, and Montgomery fell forward; an aide sank by his side; a captain, shot through the body, attempted to move forward but fell back

dead; an orderly sergeant and several other soldiers were also slain. Every man in the advance, save Captain Burr and the French guide had fallen. The column wavered, then halted. Colonel Campbell took command. Burr urged an advance, but the enemy was fast returning, and Campbell ordered a retreat. Fire was opened from the blockhouse, and a disorderly flight was made down the gorge.

The British were now sallying out in pursuit, and Burr, lifting his commander's bleeding body from its snowy shroud, bore it on his shoulders down the hill. Staggering under its weight; in snow up to his knees, he followed his comrades as best he could; until he was compelled to drop his precious burden, and flee for his life.

Arnold met with little better success. In making an assault on the first barrier, he was wounded in the leg by a musket-ball, and borne from the field. Morgan assumed command, and both barriers were carried, and some prisoners taken. After gaining an entrance to the town, he was cut off by a flanking party, and compelled to take refuge in a stone house. Within this defense, he and his gallant band sustained a siege of three hours, but were finally obliged to surrender as prisoners of war.

Thus disastrously ended the undertaking so full of

promise, and for which so much suffering and sacrifice had been made in vain. Arnold, with the shattered remnant of the little army, kept up the blockade of the rock-walled city until spring, when he took command at Quebec.

Burr was promoted to Brigade Major for his bravery, but dissatisfied with Arnold's conduct, and desiring more active employment, he took leave of the army at the mouth of the Sorrel River, where they had retreated before Burgoyne. Upon arriving at Albany, where the report of his heroism at Quebec had preceded him, he was informed that Washington was much pleased with his services in Canada, and that a visit on his part would be agreeable to the Commander-in-Chief. Proceeding to New York, he reported to General Washington in person, who invited him to join his family at Richmond Hill, then his headquarters. He remained here some six weeks, occasionally acting as an aide, but more usually employed in some clerical capacity. He was ambitious, and longed for more active service. After the campaign he had passed through in Canada, the duties assigned him could not have been otherwise than distasteful to one of his disposition. His Commander was burdened with the multifarious concerns of a nation in distress, and had little time to devote to the grievances of his officers;

besides he and Major Burr were totally ill-suited in disposition and temperament, and there soon developed an uncongenial feeling, which afterward settled into a mutual dislike. Through the kindly offices of Governor Hancock, he was tendered an appointment as aide to General Putman, then in command of the City of New York. He accepted the position, moved to the General's headquarters, and was soon busied in strengthening the defenses of the city.

It was while he was a member of General Putman's household that he met the beautiful Margaret Moncrieffe, daughter of Major Moncrieffe, of the British army, afterward known as the notorious Mrs. Coghlan, and who is sometimes referred to as the "first love of Aaron Burr." She was at this time a young, and it is believed a virtuous girl; but was indiscreet enough to fall violently in love with the handsome young rebel, who was thrown so strangely in her way. There are conflicting stories, and Burr, whether deservedly or not, has been the subject of much censure in this connection. In her "Memoirs," written many years later, Mrs. Coghlan speaks freely of her amour with Burr, and unhesitatingly declares that her love for him had survived all the wild tempests of passion and sin, but attributes to him no unworthy motive or act.

... The famous retreat of Washington across East River

followed the disastrous battle of Long Island. In that unfortunate affair, General Putman commanded in place of Green, who was sick. Burr as aide visited every part of the field; inspected the condition of the troops, and reported unfavorably as to the approaching engagement. During the fateful day that followed, he dashed from point to point with the dispatches of his "good old General," unheeding the leaden hail that swept the ranks of that devoted army. On the second night following, he stood in the darkness of the Brooklyn shore, rendering efficient service in the embarkation of the American troops, and winning the confidence and approbation of his superior officer, General McDougal.

These were the days when New York trembled with apprehension for what the future might bring forth. The army was raw and undisciplined, and their defeat crushing. The outlook was indeed gloomy and discouraging. No wonder that consternation reigned on that Sunday in September, when Howe with his British forces landed on Manhattan Island. The retreat of the Americans to Harlem Heights, seven miles away, was little better than a disorderly rout.

In the confusion, part of a brigade under General Knox was forgotten, and believing themselves to be cut off from escape took possession of a small fort on what

was known as Bunker Hill. Major Burr, who had been sent back to look for stragglers, rode up and inquired of General Knox why he had remained behind.

Knox replied, that the British were across the Island; that retreat was impossible, and that he had determined to hold the defense.

Burr remonstrated, calling his attention to the weakness of the fort; the lack of water and provisions, and again urged him to retreat; but Knox remained firm. During the discussion, the men had gathered round, and Burr warned them of their danger, and entreated them to flee; offering to lead them if they would follow. To this they agreed, and at once set off to join the main army. Burr knew the ground, and led them through the woods, and in unfrequented ways. When about four miles from the city they met with some resistance but escaped with small loss.

The men in after years declared that they would have been made prisoners in less than an hour, if Burr had not led them out. And when they remembered that of 2,500 men, who had similarly been left behind at Fort Washington, fewer than 500 survived the horrors of the British prison ships, it is not surprising that they regarded Aaron Burr as their deliverer from a fate more cruel than death.

Burr continued to be actively employed as aide to

General Putman until the latter part of July, 1777, when he received notice from Washington of his appointment to Colonel Malcom's regiment, then stationed in Orange County, being commissioned with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Colonel Malcom was not a military man, and had been elevated to his position, like many others, on account of his civil and financial influence. In a few days he turned the command over to Burr, with the remark: "You shall have all the honor of drilling and fighting the regiment, while I will be its father."

The young Colonel found his charge to be of good material, but altogether raw and inexperienced. The officers were ignorant of military requirements, and some of them he summarily dismissed. He subjected the men, who instinctively respected and obeyed him, to strict orders; recruited their numbers, and increased their efficiency, until it was regarded as one of the most capable regiments in the army.

Early in September of that year, a British detail, numbering about two thousand, made a plundering foray on the west side of the Hudson. On being notified of their movements, Burr instantly set out with his regiment to meet them. Starting at noon, they reached Paramus, sixteen miles distant, before sunset. Here he received a dispatch from Putman ordering

a retreat, but he declared that he would not run from an enemy he had not seen. Leaving his main body, he pushed on with a small party of picked men to within three miles of Hackensack. It was ten o'clock at night, and he had marched thirty miles since noon. Receiving word that the enemy's pickets were only a mile away, he left his men in a wood to rest and sleep, while he went forward alone to spy out their position. Returning just before day, he awoke his men, and silently led them within a few yards of the sleeping guard. Passing between the two sentinels at the time they were farthest apart, they advanced a few paces, when Burr, who was ahead, was challenged by another sentinel, who was shot by him and a bayonet rush made upon the guard. Taken completely by surprise, they surrendered with slight resistance. The taking off of the guard and the uprising of the militia so dismayed the British that they retreated precipitately, leaving all their plunder behind.

In November, his little regiment united with the main army at Whitemarsh, twenty miles above Philadelphia, and a few weeks after went into winter quarters with Washington at Valley Forge, where the dreadful winter was passed. While others were shivering, idle and dispirited, Burr was at the "gulf," a pass ten miles distant, engaged in drilling a band of mutinous militia.

In the battle of Monmouth, fought June 28, 1778, he commanded a brigade under Lord Stirling, and notwithstanding his senior's embarrassment acquitted himself with great credit. During the day, there was much confusion, and a great many mistakes. As Burr was advancing over a bridge that had been thrown across a morass, he received an order at the hand of one of Washington's aides to halt his men until further orders. In this precarious condition he was exposed to the hurtling shells of the enemy's artillery. His horse was shot from under him, and many of his men, including his second in command, were slain. Much to his discomfiture, what would have been a gallant charge was turned into an inglorious defeat. That night, the Americans rested on their arms, but when day dawned, they discovered that the enemy had taken flight.

Colonel Burr had remained up the two nights previous as was his wont when in proximity to a foe, but worn out with loss of sleep and fatigue, he now lay down under a tree, and soon fell asleep. When he awoke, he was exposed to the burning rays of the sun and could move only with the greatest difficulty, and it was years before he fully recovered his exhausted energies. Despite his physical condition, he remained constantly active until autumn, when he repaired to Elizabeth-



Aaron Burr.

TO MALL ABSTRACTO

town for a few weeks' rest. Finding his health so impaired as to be unfit for service, he wrote to Washington, asking to be retired without pay. Washington replied that such an arrangement was neither fair nor customary; that he could have the leave asked for, but that his pay would be continued. Burr, who was extremely sensitive about such matters, at once rejoined his regiment, now stationed at West Point. He was then nearly twenty-three years old, and is said to have been the youngest man up to this time that had commanded a regiment in this country.

At the beginning of January, 1779, Colonel Burr was assigned his last, if not his most important command—a strip of country fourteen miles long, known as Westchester lines. It was, in fact, a kind of “No Man’s Land,” occupied by Whigs and Tories, and alternately overrun by British and Americans. This field of lawlessness and bloodshed was calculated to tax the most skillful leadership; but Burr was so wary in ferreting out the first offenders, and so summary was the punishment meted out to them that their infractions were never repeated. The British were promptly driven out, and their booty recovered. Their spies were detected and punished; a fort erected on their outskirts was destroyed; a number of prisoners taken, and their lines pushed back, and held in abeyance.

Burr seemed ubiquitous; riding long distances every night; appearing at uncanny hours in unexpected places; visiting posts, and challenging pickets. His mastery of the situation inspired his men with confidence, and the inhabitants with a sense of security. Complete order was restored, and Burr was regarded as a deliverer by both Whigs and Tories. His ability is attested by the fact that Colonel Thompson, who succeeded him, was captured in open day, and nearly all of his men killed or taken prisoners. Colonel Green, placed in command a year later, was also surprised and slain, and a number of his officers and men killed and captured. They were both brave men, and had the full benefit of their predecessor's experience, but were wholly incapable of imitating his example.

His strenuous life during his four years' military service proved too much for even one of his robust constitution. He had always esteemed his duty as paramount to all personal considerations, "being instant in season and out of season"; waking when other men slept; giving no heed to fatigue or exposure, until the outraged demands of nature entered a protest so positive, that no strength of will nor system of philosophy could silence, and he was reluctantly compelled to abandon the field that had been his glory. He tendered his resignation March 10th, 1779, and

received a letter from Washington the month following, regretting the loss of so good an officer, and the cause which made his resignation necessary.

Eighteen months elapsed before he was able to resume the study of the law, which his country's call had so unceremoniously interrupted. Beginning in the autumn of 1780, he spent one year in mastering its principles. Returning to his old habit of intense application, he spent fifteen to twenty hours a day with his books. The last six months, he studied with William Smith of Haverstraw, New York, where he pursued a method of study he formulated for himself, by which he managed to acquire the greatest amount of legal lore in the least possible time. The war had made serious inroads upon his patrimony, and this with other reasons gave more than ordinary impetus to his efforts. At the end of his novitiate, he repaired to Albany, and applied to Judge Robert Yates, of the Supreme Court of New York for admission to practice, but found himself debarred by a rule that required three years of study before examination. He moved that this rule be suspended in his case because his studies had been interrupted by his employment in his country's service. To this unusual proceeding, all the members of the bar objected, and he found himself under the necessity of arguing his own case in opposi-

tion to the ablest members of the profession. Judge Yates decided that the rigor of the rule should be dispensed with, but that no indulgence would be granted as to the necessary qualifications. After a most searching and critical examination by a number of the eminent counselors who had opposed him, he was triumphantly passed, and admitted as a practitioner.

An act of the Legislature had debarred the old Tory lawyers, who had largely monopolized the business, thus leaving a comparatively open field for the rising young Whigs. Burr opened an office in Albany, and very soon found himself in possession of a practice which afforded him means for a venture he had for some time contemplated.

While stationed with his command in the vicinity of Paramus, New Jersey, he had met Mrs. Theodosia Prevost, the widow of Colonel Prevost, of the British army, who had died in India. Mrs. Prevost was a highly respectable, and accomplished woman; of a literary turn, and much given to hospitality. The most genteel people in the neighborhood were numbered among her acquaintances. James Monroe—afterward President—is also mentioned as one of her warmest friends and admirers.

Burr, who was no more a laggard in love than war, lost no time in cultivating her acquaintance, and the

affair shortly assumed a phase not accurately described as a passing fancy. He visited her whenever opportunity offered, sometimes at the risk of life and liberty and on the second of July, 1782, they were married in the little Dutch Reformed Church at Paramus.

It was one of those marriages for which it is difficult to account. That a man of Burr's prospects, and well-known reputation for gallantry should marry a widow, ten years his senior, with two strapping boys, and not at all handsome, belonged to the realm of the improbable. It is evident that his choice was guided neither by passion nor policy. She possessed little fortune, and although American by birth, her alliance with the British rendered her an object of more or less suspicion. Yet she was not unworthy of him. She had an easy grace, a fascinating manner, was intelligent and refined. Burr's regard seems to have been won by her intellectual attainments, her charming personality, and beauty of character and soul. It may be that each realized that the other had loved and lost; they both had lived long enough to know that the fragrant incense of first love, when dissipated, like the sweet perfume of the rose once shed, is lost to the world forever. Each was satisfied with what the other gave. Their admiration was mutual, and the union a happy one. For a time they lived in Albany,

and it was here that Theodosia, their only child was born.

Upon the British evacuating New York, Colonel Burr was induced by his growing clientage to remove to that city. In the spring of 1784, he was elected as a member of the Legislature, and served during two sessions. In those days, the duties of law-makers were not so onerous as at present, and as the sessions were held in the City of New York, he was also able to look after his law practice while serving as a legislator.

During the three years that followed, he took little part in politics, but in September, 1789, Governor Clinton appointed him Attorney General of the State of New York, which office he acceptably filled for two years. This position proved a very arduous one. By an act of the Legislature, the Treasurer, Comptroller, and Attorney General, were named a Commission for the adjustment of claims incurred by the war. Burr prepared an elaborate report, which was approved by the Legislature without amendment, and was also adopted by other states in their adjustment of similar claims.

Although he had distinguished himself in various official positions, he could not at this time be properly regarded as a politician. He had, in a way, identified himself with the Anti-Federalists, but his political

vestments were still of a neutral shade rather than ultra-tinted. That he was not a partisan is shown by the fact that notwithstanding the Federalists were greatly in the majority, he was elected as United States senator from New York, in January, 1791. He took his seat in the following October. His duties began as Chairman of the committee that drafted the reply of the Senate to the annual address of the President, a compliment awarded him as the youngest member of that body. During the six years that succeeded, he took a prominent part in their deliberations. Along with other measures, he favored: lower rates of postage; granting aid to the French people; the gradual abolition of slavery, and open sessions of the United States Senate.

In the fall of 1792, Governor Clinton, without consulting his wishes, nominated him for Judge of the Supreme Court of New York; but preferring then to remain in the Senate, he declined to accept the nomination. He was succeeded in the Senate by Philip Schuyler, who had preceded him in that capacity. In 1798, he was again elected a member of the New York Assembly.

During all these years, he had maintained a circumspect political attitude. True, he had cast his lot for good with the "Liberals," yet he numbered many

warm friends in both parties. His executive ability as a great political leader had not, as yet, been called into action. His wonderful powers of organization had been held in leash for a more convenient season. But the time came when his hand was shown, and the seats of the mighty were shaken. He was heralded by the populace as a conqueror; but by the chief political priests, he was anathematized, and his name cast out as evil.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIVALS

ON the night that General Putman's aide stood on the Brooklyn shore embarking troops on East River, another young officer, with the rank of Captain, was bringing up the rear of the retreating army. He had received a baptism of fire. Though a night and a day had elapsed, and another night was far spent, the din of battle was still in his ears. Its rush and roar reminded him of a fearful hurricane that had stripped an island far out at sea. His proud spirit had risen with the storm, but his cannon had played down the wooded hill-slope on the red incoming tide without avail. Hemmed in, outnumbered, but undismayed, he had reluctantly retreated, losing all of his baggage and one of his faithful guns.

All night long the spectral army moved in the direction of East River. The clinging fog hung like a pall on the crimson hills and troubled tides. The suppressed shuffle of the marching men mingled with the murmur of the river, and the muffled oars gave no warning of their departure. In the gray dawn of

morning, General Howe and his men stole over the crest of the intrenchments, but they found them silent and deserted. Nine thousand men with all their artillery and military stores had been transported across East River to New York in the very presence of the enemy, and Washington had established his claim to the title of one of the world's greatest generals. The young artilleryman, who had brought up the rear, had not yet met his chief, but he was destined to share in his glory; not as a military hero, but as one of the greatest statesmen that this country has ever produced.

Alexander Hamilton, the son of James Hamilton and Rachel Levine, nee Faucet, was born on the island of Nevis, one of the Caribbees, on January 11, 1757. He was about nine months younger, and one inch shorter than Aaron Burr. But there were other resemblances more striking than age or inches: Both were orphaned in early childhood, and cared for by maternal relatives; both were precocious, and had made rapid strides in learning before entering college; both enlisted in the army when young, and fought under the same flag; both were military in their instincts, and ambitious for a soldier's laurels; both studied law, and were eminent in its practice; both were office-holders, and in the end, politicians; both were good-looking and of distinguished address; both

were men of parts, and leaders in every field they entered. Much they had in common, but there were also wide divergences in personal and intellectual endowment: Hamilton's eyes were blue, and deep set, with hair to match; Burr was darker, and his eyes, black and piercing. Hamilton was a brilliant conversationalist; Burr was more reserved. Hamilton's intellect had the broader grasp; Burr was the more given to details; Hamilton was by far the greater theorist; Burr the more practical man of affairs.

Nowhere were their differentiations more in evidence than at the bar, or in the assembly. Burr's balance was always perfect; never for a moment losing his poise under the most trying circumstances. His manner was direct; his thought, lucid; his language, good old English. His voice was clear and firm; his argument concise, and concentrated on the strong points of his case, which he elucidated with all his ability. His whole demeanor was as if he were conscious of the justice of his cause, and of his ability to maintain it. Hamilton's method was more labored and redundant. He covered the entire field, and removed every impediment. His imagination was fertile and his rhetoric fine. His style was the embodiment of grace, and his appeal sometimes impassioned. It has been said of old time that Burr was as

terse and methodic as Sallust; Hamilton, as rapturous and flowing as Cicero. He was a natural orator, possibly the greater lawyer, but Burr was the more successful practitioner.

Nature formed these two for antagonists, and rivals they were of the truest type: In love; in war; at the bar; in politics; at every point of contact in their eventful careers. And through it all, they played their parts with a mastery, unconscious and unmindful of the bitter end. Outwardly, they were always courteous; but beneath the polished surface of social requirement ran the mazes of a current that deepened and widened as time went by. It is impossible here to trace the flexuous ramifications of this stream from its source to its fatal termination. Sufficient to say that the existing evidence conclusively shows, that during many long and trying years, every cause for provocation was entirely on the side of Aaron Burr.

It is asserted that Hamilton was impressed with the idea that Burr was a dangerous man to be intrusted with the affairs of the country, and as the guardian genius of the public weal, he conceived it to be his patriotic duty to thwart his promotion at every opportunity. It might be more truly said, that he considered Burr's advancement inimical to his own progress, and the success of the party he represented.

Some declare that the discriminating favor of fair and frail women was at the bottom of it all. Whatever the cause, the fact remains that Hamilton persisted in secretly maligning the character, and impugning the motives of his rival.

Burr's elevation to the Senate over General Schuyler, Hamilton's father-in-law, in 1791, contributed in widening the breach already existing. Hamilton as Secretary of the Treasury needed just such a coadjutor in Congress, and his resentment is shown in his correspondence regarding Burr. During the Presidential canvass of 1792, he writes: "He is for or against nothing, but as it suits his interest or ambition. He is determined, as I conceive, to make his way to the head of the popular party, and to climb *per fas aut nefas* to the highest honors of the State, and as much higher as circumstances will permit. Embarrassed, as I understand, in his circumstances, with an extravagant family, bold, enterprising and intriguing, I am mistaken if it be not his object to play the game of conspiracy, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career." Again, he writes to Rufus King: "Mr. Burr's integrity as an individual is not unimpeached, and as a public man, he is one of the worst sort . . . in a word, if we have an embryo Caesar in the United States, it is Burr." These letters were not written

for publication, neither in the strict confidence of friendship, but to be circulated by underground methods for political effect. King, in a few days responds that "Care has been taken to put our friends at the eastward on their guard."

The dispatches mentioned were sent out in September. On the 15th of the following month, he informs another friend, with admirable inconsistency, that "My opinion of Mr. Burr is yet to form, but according to the present state of it, he is a man whose only political principle is to mount, at all events, to the highest legal honors of the nation, and as much further as circumstances will carry him. Imputations, not favorable to him as a man, rest upon him, but I do not vouch for their authenticity."

Clinton had been elected as Governor of New York in April preceding. Burr had been talked of as an independent candidate, as it will be remembered, that, at this time, he was not a strict party man. He was also mentioned by both political parties as an available man for the place, and a number of leading Federalists went so far as to write Hamilton, who was their acknowledged leader, as to the advisability of his candidacy. Hamilton put his veto upon it. Burr was not nominated, and John Jay and Governor Clinton made the canvass, with the result mentioned.

In 1794, Washington intimated that he would appoint a member of the Republican party to succeed Gouverneur Morris, as Minister to France. At a caucus of their Senators and Representatives, Burr was unanimously chosen for the position, and a committee of which both Madison and Monroe were members appointed to wait upon the President. Washington declined to ratify the nomination, and the caucus sent the committee back a second time with the same result. The friends of Burr have always claimed that Hamilton was responsible for this refusal, and that Washington's bias can be traced to the undue influence of his Secretary of the Treasury.

A similar affair, which occurred in 1798, during the administration of John Adams, tends to confirm their view of the matter. The threatening attitude of the French Directory had resulted in the reorganization of the American army. Washington was made Commander-in-chief, and Hamilton, his second in rank. As Inspector General, the latter had charge of all the levees to be raised, except in case of actual hostilities. Adams desired to make Burr a Brigadier. His military record was unquestioned, and, as President of the Senate during the six years Burr had served as a member, he had had ample opportunity of judging his personal fitness for the appointment. He alone held

the right of making nominations, but had yielded his prerogative to Washington, to whom he communicated his wish regarding Burr. An account of the transaction is best rendered in his own words:

“I proposed to General Washington in a conference between him and me, and through him to the triumvirate (Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney) to nominate Colonel Burr for a brigadier general. Washington’s answer to me was, “By all that I have known and heard, Colonel Burr is a brave and able officer; but the question is whether he has not equal talents at intrigue.” How shall I describe to you my sensations and reflections at that moment. He had compelled me to promote over the heads of Lincoln, Clinton, Gates, Knox, and others, and even over Pinckney, one of his own triumvirates (Hamilton) the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable, and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself, and now dreaded an intriguer in a poor brigadier. He did, however, propose it to the triumvirate, at least to Hamilton. But I was not permitted to nominate Burr.”

Hamilton had triumphed again, but a contest was brewing that was to put his generalship to a still severer test. Burr had tasted of the sweets of political life, and upon retiring from the Senate, had determined

upon organizing his party and leading it to victory. It had many able names, and was not inconsequential in point of numbers, but it lacked organic cohesion, and concerted action. He would be its real imperator, and show it how to conquer.

New York then, as in after years, enjoyed the prestige of being reckoned the pivotal state in the Union; and the country districts were so nearly divided in political sentiment, that the city decided the contest in the state. The Federalists had elected John Jay Governor in 1798, and defeated the Republican city ticket, with Burr at the head, in 1799. Jefferson declared the Presidential contest more doubtful in 1800, than it had been four years prior to that time. Burr alone was not discouraged. For three years he had been preparing for the contest, and although the struggle promised to be a desperate one, he entered the lists with a determination to win.

A slip of Hamilton's made his victory possible. At that time the legislature of each state cast its vote for President, and in making out a list of representatives for the city, he selected his own friends, regardless of their political weight in the community. A copy of this list fell into the hands of Burr, who pocketed it with the sententious remark, "Now I have him hol-low." He, at once, made out a list of the most promi-

ment men in the city, or, for that matter, in the state. It included such names as George Clinton, Horatio Gates, Brockholst Livingston, and others equally well known. Not a name was placed on the list that did not give it additional strength, and at the same time, sharply emphasize the weakness of the other ticket. The extreme audacity of the man is not more clearly shown in the making up of such a list, than his consummate tact and skill in securing the consent of the leaders of opposing factions to appear on the same ticket. This accomplished, an immense mass-meeting was held, and the campaign launched amid the wildest enthusiasm.

The Republicans were now fully aroused, and the Federalists, who had been confidently resting on their former triumphs, awakened to a sense of their insecurity. With them everything was at stake. Defeat here meant the loss of their control of the government; and they hastened to bestir themselves to make good their walls.

Burr was making the fight of his life, and his old army tactics were again called into play. He was everywhere present; counseling, encouraging, inspiring his followers. He infused their ranks with his own resistless spirit. Neither were their energies allowed to dissipate. Everything was reduced to system.

Lists of all the voters were prepared, with data as to political affiliations, temperament, and habits. If an adherent had money, but was lazy or inactive, he was excused from arduous duties but induced to contribute liberally to the campaign fund. On the other hand, if he were a good worker, but poor, or parsimonious, he was made to pay only a nominal contribution, but was urged on to greater activity. Individual preference was subject to the will of the majority, and the majority, in turn, made to move at the instance of committees. Meetings were held in every part of the city; campaign literature was circulated, and no stone left unturned to insure success at the polls.

The election opened on the morning of April 29th and lasted three days. Hamilton and Burr were constantly in the midst of the fray, animating their cohorts, and disputing every inch of ground in a supreme effort for victory. It was indeed a battle of giants, and upon its results was staked the future policy of a nation. Sometimes they spoke from the same platform, and their bearing toward each other on such occasions was so graceful and courtly, even for those days of strict propriety, that their elegant manners were remembered long after their speeches were forgotten.

The contest closed at sundown, May 2nd, and before

Hamilton slept that night, he knew that his rival, for once, had won; though only by a margin of four hundred and ninety votes. Baffled and almost frantic, he wrote a pressing letter to Governor Jay, urging him to convene an extra session of the old legislature in advance of the new body, for the purpose of providing for the choice of Presidential electors by districts. This arrangement would have defeated the vote of New York, and given the election to the Federalists. Jay was a member of that party, but he treated Hamilton's proposition with the scorn it deserved. Among his papers, long after, was found the letter with this indorsement: "Proposing a measure for party purposes which I think it would not become me to adopt." By some means, the contents of the letter was discovered and published, much to the consternation of Hamilton and his clique, and the whole scheme exposed.

Hamilton's friends have called this "the one dark blot on his public career." His enemies have insisted that it is but one of many. It was nothing more nor less than a deliberate attempt to defeat the will of the people. But for the will of the people, Hamilton cared naught. Neither by birth nor principle was he an American, and we say it in no spirit of detraction. In him we have the strange paradox of a man championing

a cause; devoting his life to it; accomplishing more for it, and through it, than any other has ever done, or can hope to do; and all, without entertaining the least regard for it, or shadow of faith in it. That was Hamilton's attitude toward what he was pleased to call the "crazy old hulk of a constitution," but what our fathers have taught us to revere as the great palladium of the people's liberty.

"Mine is an odd destiny," writes he. "Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present constitution than myself; and contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know, from the very beginning. I am still laboring to prop the worthless fabric. Yet I have the murmur of its friends no less than the curses of its foes for my reward. What can I do better than withdraw from the scene? Every day proves to me more and more that this American world was not made for me."

Hamilton was an aristocrat, a believer in class representation, a monarchist. A democracy had no charms for him, and the ascendancy of the Republican party, to him, meant not only the defeat of all his cherished schemes, but utter ruin to the whole country. Burr's success seems to have imbibited him to a degree bordering on frenzy, and his letters at this time overflow with denunciations of his triumphant rival.

“As to Burr,” writes he to Bayard, “these things are admitted, and indeed cannot be denied, that he is a man of extreme and irregular ambition; that he is selfish to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly profligate.” To Wolcott he declares that, “He will employ the rogues of all parties to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove. These things are to be inferred with moral certainty from the character of the man. Every step in his career proves that he has formed himself upon the model of Catiline, and that he is too cold-blooded and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan.” And again to Bayard, “He is as unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave.”

In the face of these malicious accusations, he treated Burr when they met with the strictest decorum. Their families were on intimate terms; the gentlemen occasionally dined with each other, and their associates entertained no suspicion of any feeling between them other than that of friendly rivalry. It appears that for a long time, Burr himself was ignorant of his opponent's persistent attacks. When he finally received some intimation of Hamilton's slanderous character-

izations, he spoke to him on the subject, and was tendered an explanation, which he accepted, with the understanding that henceforth such detractions were to be discontinued. Thus matters went on until 1804.

Burr's political prestige had waned perceptibly during his incumbency as Vice-President. Prior to his triumph in 1800, the political contests in New York were largely influenced by the factional fights of the ruling clans or families. Of these, there were three: The Clintons, the Schuylers, and the Livingstons. The first two houses had led the wings of the old Whig party during the period of reconstruction following the Revolution. The Livingstons had acted in common with the Schuylers, until after the adoption of the Constitution. They were its ardent friends and supporters; but for some cause, soon after this event, had identified themselves with the Anti-Federalists, of whom the Clintons were the acknowledged leaders in the State. Upon entering the political arena, Burr had determined upon avoiding all entangling alliances with these clans, and at once set about to establish an independent organization by which he could better further his plans. This was largely composed of young men, who were his admirers, and ambitious like himself. It rapidly grew in numbers and influence, until it came to be known to his enemies as Burr's Myrmidons; by

his friends, as the Tenth Legion, and to those of later times, as the Sons of St. Tammany, or more commonly, Tammany Hall. It has been seen how effectively its influence was wielded in his great battle with Hamilton. But the years had brought many changes. He wrought in tempestuous times, and as an independent power, he now occupied the storm-center, about which gathered all the elemental fury of factional strife.

While a member of the Senate, that body had tied on a judiciary measure, particularly odious to the Republicans. On a motion to refer the bill to a committee for amendment, Burr, to their discomfiture, cast his vote with the Federalists. He was also accused of having intrigued for votes in the Presidential contest with Jefferson. This charge, as has been shown, was entirely without foundation; but what mattered that to those who had determined upon his political undoing.

All the world remembers Virginia's long Presidential regime; but it fails to remember the skillful maneuvering by which its interruption was prevented. Aaron Burr of New York stood in the pathway of Thomas Jefferson and the Virginia Junto, as it was then called. He was spoken of as the "heir apparent," and according to established precedent was the legitimate successor

of Jefferson. However, the Virginia politicians resolved that their line should not be broken by an interloper. In order to prevent it, they formed a coalition with the rival factions of Burr in his own state. Henry Adams, an author of acknowledged authority, says: "Never in the History of the United States did so powerful a combination of rival politicians unite to break down a single man, as that which arrayed itself against Burr. For as the hostile circle gathered about him, he could plainly see not only Jefferson, Madison, and the whole Virginia legion, with Daune and his "*Aurora*" at their heels; not only DeWitt Clinton and his whole family, with Cheetham and his "*Watchtower*" by their side; but strangest of all companions—Alexander Hamilton himself, joining hands with his own bitterest enemies to complete the ring."

So completely was Burr's political fabric undermined, that, in the convention of 1804, his claims were entirely ignored. Defeated by the politicians; discredited by the leaders, he resolved to appeal to the people. In February, he was nominated as an independent candidate for Governor of New York. Morgan Lewis was the regular nominee of the Republicans. The Federalists were rent by strife, and appealed to by Hamilton, in a caucus held in Albany, decided not to put a candidate in the field. This gave

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Hamilton an opportunity to throw all his influence against Burr. The result was foreshadowed in his unequal contest with the allied forces. Lewis received thirty-five thousand votes, and Burr twenty-eight thousand.

This was his last political encounter. The contest through which he had just passed was the most acrid and malicious in the annals of the state. Calumny, vileness, and libel were borne on the waves of bitter feeling, until they finally overwhelmed both the maligner and the maligned. Among other things which came to the surface was a letter written by Charles D. Cooper, containing certain sentiments expressed by Hamilton that were especially obnoxious to Burr: "General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government. . . . I would detail to you a more despicable opinion which General Hamilton had expressed of Mr. Burr "

A newspaper containing this letter found its way into the hands of Burr. On June 18th, he sent the paper, with the objectionable passages marked, and accompanied by a note by the hand of William P. Van Ness to Hamilton, requesting "a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any

expression which would warrant the assertion of Mr. Cooper."

In a lengthy reply, Hamilton declined to give such an explanation, but stated that he stood ready to avow or disavow any specific charge attributed to him, and concluded: "I trust, on more reflection, you will see the matter in the same light with me. If not, I can only regret the circumstance, and must abide the consequences."

Burr conceived this communication to be an evasion, and insisted upon a definite reply. In a message, sent by Judge Van Ness, he defends his position as follows:

"A Burr, far from conceiving that rivalry authorizes a latitude not otherwise justifiable, always feels greater delicacy in such cases, and would think it meanness to speak of a rival but in terms of respect; to do justice to his merits; to be silent to his foibles. Such has invariably been his conduct towards Jay, Adams, and Hamilton; the only three who can be supposed to have stood in that relation to him.

"That he has much reason to believe that, in regard to Mr. Hamilton, there has been no reciprocity. For several years his name has been lent to the support of base slanders. He has never had the generosity, the magnanimity, or the candor to contradict or disavow. Burr forbears to particularize, as it could only tend to

produce new irritations; but having made great sacrifices for the sake of harmony; having exercised forbearance until it approached to humiliation, he has seen no effect produced by such conduct but a repetition of injury. He is obliged to conclude that there is, on the part of Mr. Hamilton, a settled and implacable malevolence; that he will never cease in his conduct towards Mr. Burr, to violate those courtesies of life; and that, hence, he has no alternative but to announce these things to the world; which consistently with Mr. Burr's ideas of propriety can be done in no way but that which he has adopted. He is incapable of revenge, still less is he capable of imitating the conduct of Mr. Hamilton, by committing secret depredations on his fame and character. But these things must have an end."

There was other correspondence of like character, always recurring to Burr's original demand that Hamilton should make a general disavowal of any intention in his various conversations to convey impressions derogatory to the honor of Burr. Hamilton sought to avoid a collision, and offered to enter into an explanation of any specific occasion, but refused to reply to Burr's general requisition.

There could be but one ending to such a controversy at such a time, between such rivals. Both were men

of the world; both were jealous of their honor; both conformed to military requirement; both had sanctioned dueling, either by participating as principal or second; both were too proud to recede from a position once taken. A challenge was given by Burr, and accepted by Hamilton.

Very early in the morning, on July 11th, 1804, a little group of men were met on a grassy ledge, under the rocky heights of Weehauken, New Jersey. Though hedged in by great cliffs, stunted trees, and tangled vines, their situation commanded a sweeping stretch of river and shore, now radiant and beautiful in the morning sun.

Hemmed in and secluded, this retreat was better suited for the devotional meditations of some devout ascetic, rather than deeds of blood and violence; yet it had been the scene of many sanguinary encounters. Only a few feet from where Alexander Hamilton was now stationed, his own son, Philip, had fallen in defense of his father's honor, three years before. Full ten paces away stood Aaron Burr, calmly watching their seconds, Nathaniel Pendleton and William P. Van Ness, who were completing the preliminaries. They had already measured the distance, cast lots for choice of positions, and to determine who should give the signal; both preferences falling to Mr. Pendle-

ton, the second of Hamilton. The pistols were then loaded, and as Pendleton gave Hamilton his weapon, he asked:

"Will you have the hair-spring set?"

"Not this time," was the reply.

After explaining the rules, Pendleton inquired:

"Are you ready?"

"Ready," was the answer given by both.

Then, on the heavy stillness, came the word—"Present!"

There was a double report, the shots following in such rapid succession, that the seconds were never able to agree as to who fired first.

Burr's ball took effect in a vital part, and Hamilton, clutching wildly, reeled and fell forward on his face. His ball rustled through the branches some feet above his rival, and a little to one side. Burr glanced up through the curling smoke at a twig that had been severed—seeing Hamilton falling, he advanced a step toward him, with a manner expressing regret, but suddenly stopping short, turned without speaking, and was hurried down the steep to their boat by Van Ness. Pushing off, they rowed rapidly away in the direction of Richmond Hill.

Hamilton was mortally wounded. Mr. Pendleton, assisted by Dr. Hosack, Mr. Davis, and the boatman,

who had been in waiting, carried him to his barge, and tenderly bore him to the other shore, and thence to the house of his friend Bayard near by. He died at two o'clock the following afternoon, and was buried with military honors from Trinity Church, where a funeral oration was delivered by Gouverneur Morris.

A great wave of popular feeling followed on the death of Hamilton. Federalist and Republican united in paying tribute to the memory of the fallen statesman, and alike vied with each other in bitter denunciation of his slayer.

Burr was not prepared for such an outburst of indignation, affairs of this kind were of ordinary occurrence, and he had not reckoned on the significance that would attach in the public mind. But never before had such a shining mark fallen on the field of honor, and never before had such an opportunity been afforded his enemies to compass his downfall. His act was regarded with unmitigated horror. His friends were silenced, and those who had participated in the duel were driven into temporary exile.

Burr himself remained in the vicinity of Richmond Hill for ten days, and then made his way incognito to Philadelphia. While here, he received a letter from John Swartwout, of New York, dated August 2d, notifying him that the Coroner's Jury had brought in

a verdict, charging him with the murder of Hamilton, with Van Ness and Pendleton as accessories, but adding that there was a slight reaction in his favor. He remained in Philadelphia a few days longer, and then turned his steps southward, where he was well received. Most of his time was spent with friends in Georgia and South Carolina. During the last of October, he set out on his return to Washington by the way of Petersburg, Virginia, where he received an ovation. He arrived at Washington November 4th, and on the opening of Congress, resumed his duties as Vice-President.

The most important event of this, his last session, was the impeachment of Samuel Chase, a member of the Supreme Court. The trial lasted one month, and attracted wide attention. Under Burr's direction, the Senate Chamber was transformed into a vast court-room, and fitted up with galleries to accommodate the vast concourse that attended. On each side of the Vice-President were ranged the Senators, in the form of a semi-circle; while special divisions of the floor were assigned the foreign embassies and dignitaries of the nation.

Burr's conduct of the proceedings elicited the praise of both friends and enemies. A contemporary account declares that, "He presided with the dignity and im-

partiality of an angel, but with the rigor of a devil."

The trial closed on Friday, March 1st, and the next day, Burr took formal leave of the Senate in a speech that produced a profound sensation. Most of his auditors were politically opposed to him; some were his personal enemies, yet tears are said to have flowed that day, and that quite freely. A senator afterwards relating the circumstance said that he wished the tradition might be preserved as one of the most extraordinary events he had ever witnessed. Another being asked how long Mr. Burr was speaking, replied that he could form no idea; it might have been an hour, and it might have been but a moment; when he came to his senses, he seemed to have been awakened as from a kind of trance.

It was one of the rare moments of Burr's life, and gives us a glimpse not only of the best that was in him, but of his power over the minds of men. A single paragraph of his address is here given, which, after the lapse of a century, is as timely as if uttered yesterday. "This house," said he, "is a sanctuary; a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty; and it is here—here in this exalted refuge—here, if anywhere, will resistance be made to the storms of political frenzy and the silent arts of corruption; and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the dema-

gogue or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor."

Amid the blaze of this grand finale, this "well-graced actor" quit the stage of political life forever.

CHAPTER V

A LAND OF ROMANCE

MANY of the world's greatest conquests have been achieved without appealing to the force of arms; and some of its most brilliant victories won without inflicting the bitter pang of defeat. Such a conquest was won; such a victory celebrated on the 20th of December, 1803, when the drooping, tri-colored flag of France was lowered from its lofty height, above the public square of New Orleans, to give place to "Old Glory." They met in friendly greeting as it rose, and then, amid the booming of cannon, the acclamations of the multitude, and the music of "Hail Columbia," far above the spires of the "Crescent City," its bonny stars and stripes were borne out on the breeze, proclaiming to the world that Louisiana was ours.

Louisiana! What haunting dreams of glory and of gold are conjured up at the mention of that name! What spectral processions of mail-clad warriors and black-robed priests glide phantom-like into that mazy wilderness of the past! Home of the red monarch, Quigaultanqui; the warlike Chickasaws, and

the sun-worshipping Natchez! consecrated by the blood of the chivalrous sons of France and the bronzed knights of Spain, whose minions were at last destined to yield to the imperious sway of the Anglo-Saxon! What banners were unfurled in the shadows of its interminable forests! What songs of triumph, what shouts of victory once wakened their lonely echoes! What groans of defeat, what whispered messages from dying lips fell there, unheeded, upon their gloomy solitudes!

Here lie, undeveloped, rich mines of romance; untold wealth for song and story. Notwithstanding the limits of this volume, some knowledge of this wonderful country; its plot and counter-plot, is necessary to a correct understanding of what shall follow. Explored by De Soto and his Spanish adventurers, who reached the banks of the Mississippi in 1541; it was formally claimed by La Salle for France, and named in honor of his sovereign, one hundred and forty-one years later. It remained a possession of that country until the close of the French and Indian War. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the territory east of the great river, save a small strip at its mouth, was ceded to England; that to the west having the year before been made over to Spain. The aggression of England on her American colonies followed hard upon

this event; and in the war that resulted, the colonists, in their turn, coming off victorious, succeeded to all the holdings of the Mother Country, east of the Mississippi.

The region south of the Ohio was then practically a wilderness; if we except the settlements in the District of Kentucky, and what was afterwards known as the Tennessee Country; the former being occupied by Virginians who had come by the way of the Ohio, while their neighbors farther south had ventured over the mountains from North Carolina. By this time, the course of empire that had been checked temporarily again began to move forward. This movement was not confined to any particular section of the country, but was a resume of the unerring trend of civilization westward; the forward march of the conquering nation toward its destiny.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, the vanguard of this army had bivouacked, here and there, along the Valley of the Ohio, which later served as a recruiting-ground for the farther South, and the newer Northwest, which was now beginning to attract attention. Kentucky and Tennessee received large accessions from this western tide; yet their growing importance did not shield them from the inconveniences, the trials and neglect common to such communities in remote territory. Separated from the East by the

frowning barriers of the Alleghanies; their only means of communication the long, tedious journeys overland; shut in to their own resources, there developed, especially in Kentucky, a growing spirit of sectionalism, that boded no good to either East or West. The inhabitants of this dark dueling-ground of the red men had left their homes beyond the mountains, and had not looked behind. They had put their hand to the plow with no thought of turning back. They were a hardy, adventurous, independent race. The freedom of the forest was within their veins. The very atmosphere they breathed was fresh with the possibilities of this new country. It was the land of their adoption; they had defended it against savage hands, and they were now jealous of its future prospects. Its right to recognition and statehood was the engrossing theme of their rural gatherings; the all-absorbing topic of discussion around their firesides, and on the hustings. Many were in favor of an independent government. Some of the baser sort counseled an alliance with Spain. All were open in their criticism of the tardy action of the general government; yet the great majority were patriotic at heart, and would have marched and fought at its call as in days gone by, and were actually among the first to take the field against the British a few years later.

The Union then was looked upon more as a confederation of sovereign states, especially was this true of the South. In no section of the country was it regarded the organic body we now conceive it to be. More than half of a century elapsed before it was cemented by the sacrificial blood of the Blue and the Gray.

In the meantime, the Spaniards down the Mississippi had not been idle. They had extended their settlements as far north as St. Louis; and the province of Louisiana in their hands was fast becoming prosperous. Field and forest yielded rich returns; the great river was an inexhaustible source of wealth; but of all, New Orleans was esteemed the pearl of greatest price. Its position was the key to the Valley of the Mississippi. They made it a port of entry, at which tribute was exacted from the American settlers up the river. The furs they trapped; the wheat, corn, and tobacco they produced; the boats they built were alike subject to Spanish duty. We do not wonder that they were justly incensed; that the question of free navigation was earnestly agitated; that Congress was petitioned, and when that dilatory body at last bestirred itself in vain, that the people, disgusted, sought for some direct means, whereby their neglected grievances might be redressed, and the insolent Dons humiliated. They

might have raised an army of backwoodsmen, who were already armed, that could have swept the whole Spanish incubus from the face of their fair land. That they did not so was owing, not so much to the wiser counsels of the government to wait and hope, as to the lack of a leader who was equal to the occasion; and the Spaniards had great reason to thank their lucky stars that such a leader, at that critical period, was not forthcoming.

True to her traditions for treachery, the policy of Spain was not war, but chicanery. Her game was not to oppose the settlers by open show of arms, but to win the West by underhanded duplicity. If there were dupes among the Americans who were base enough to serve her purpose, she might hope for some measure of success, and of these, there appears to have been no lack. First to profit by her duplicity, was that arch-conspirator, General James Wilkinson, who had acquired some distinction during the Revolution. He was a man of corpulent body, with a red face and pompous bearing. Shrewd in disposition; discriminating in judgment, and utterly unprincipled in character, he made an admirable ally for the wily Spaniard. During the throes from which Kentucky emerged into a young and vigorous statehood, he was plotting with Myro, the governor of Louisiana, for her

dismemberment, and annexation to the Spanish dominion. Feted, and favored with certain exclusive privileges of trade by the Spanish governor, on the occasion of his first visit to New Orleans, he entered eagerly into an alliance that not only promised rich returns, but furnished substantial evidence of profit at the time. He had descended the Mississippi a Kentucky planter, in a flat-boat laden with flour and tobacco. He came back over the mountains—having sailed from New Orleans to Philadelphia—like a prince, in a coach and four, extravagantly equipped, and attended by a body-guard of servants.

A man less unprincipled would have hesitated to have publicly proclaimed his own barter and sale; but his spectacular *debut* in the role he was to play seemed to have been a part of the program, intended to advertise the munificence of Spain, and the advantages to be gained under her tutelage. Nor was the device without its influence. Self-interest and personal gain have always been the most dangerous enemies of the public weal; and the men of that day were tempted under conditions that might prove fatal to the fair fame of more trusted servants in later times. Harry Innes, Attorney General, Caleb Wallace, one of the Supreme Judges, John Brown, and Benjamin Sebastian, were among the more prominent of

Kentucky's citizens, who committed themselves to what we would now consider very questionable enterprises.

Another intrigue by the Spanish Minister at Philadelphia, Gardoqui by name, served as a kind of check-mate to Wilkinson's scheme. His plan was to attract prominent citizens from the States to the province of Louisiana, who with their friends and neighbors, on allying themselves with Spain, were to be awarded large areas of the arable lands along the Mississippi. He reasoned that a tide of emigration would thus set in; thereby strengthening their hold upon American soil; binding together the divided interests of the two nationalities in the West, and eventually alienating the disaffected Americans east of the river to the Spanish crown.

Colonel Morgan, of Revolutionary fame, smarting under some real or fancied grievance against the government, availed himself of Gardoqui's offer, and upon agreeing to locate a large number of families, received an immense grant of land some distance south of the mouth of the river Ohio. Here, he proceeded to lay out a town, he named New Madrid. Fifty American settlers transferred their interests to Spanish soil; a free port of entry was established, and an insurmountable barrier blocked Wilkinson's path to coveted place and power.

But New Madrid, with her sharp eyes and quick ears, was not the only thorn in his flesh. The President, as a conciliating measure, appointed a number of the disaffected leaders to government and district offices, and the artful intriguer saw his coadjutors slowly falling away, and his influence steadily waning. What was worse than all else, the court of Spain, in opposition to his protests, now granted the equal right of passing produce down the Mississippi on the payment of a fifteen per cent. duty. The result he had foreseen quickly followed. Commerce revived; discontent was allayed; lands increased in value; emigration was accelerated; Wilkinson's monopoly broken, and the evidences of his treachery, notwithstanding his powers of dissimulation, became more and more convincing. His good fortune, however, did not desert him. He was one of those lucky rascals, whose career seemed to defy all just laws of retribution; and one fine morning, his enemies awoke to find him General-in-chief of all the military forces in the Southwest, by virtue of a commission given under the hand of President Washington.

That a man of Wilkinson's ilk should be elevated to such a position was as much a surprise to his contemporaries, as how he managed to retain the place for long years is an enigma to the people of our time.

Those who advised his appointment justified their action by the pretext, that "it put the lion in the toils." By which was meant that it placed him where he could better be watched. Subsequent events, however, proved the fallacy of such confidence in his environment.

Miro had been recalled by the Spanish government at his own request, and in 1794, we find two of Wilkinson's trusted envoys, Owen and Collins, on their way to the new governor, Baron de Carondelet. The new ruler was even more eager than his predecessor to serve his masters, and strengthen the foothold of Spain upon American soil by bringing about a separation of the Western States from the Union. Twelve thousand dollars was the amount intrusted to the envoys for the General; and dispatches forwarded in cipher, for greater safety sewn up in the collars of their coats. Owen, on his way back, was murdered by his boat-crew, who made way with the money he carried, and buried his body on the shore. The murderers were arrested and brought before Harry Innes, who had been made a federal judge. He refused to try them on the ground that they were Spanish subjects, and sent them on to Wilkinson at Fort Warren, and he, in turn, sent them back to New Madrid. While at Fort Massie, on the way, they were given a kind of preliminary hear-

ing, but the Spanish interpreter refused to divulge their secret, and the case was finally dismissed. Considerable publicity was given to the matter at the time, and the Spanish authorities were in mortal dread lest the body of Owen should be exhumed, and the dispatches brought to light. But their fear was unfounded. True, Owen was a friend of Judge Innes, and had been recommended to Wilkinson by him, but it appears that they preferred to have the murderers go free than to have the conspiracy exposed.

Collins, the other envoy, fitted out a boat at New Orleans, which was destroyed by a hurricane. A second vessel was made ready in the bayou of St. John, and the remainder of the money sent round in his charge, by the way of Charleston. Wilkinson claimed that Collins invested the money sent him in some West India enterprise, and that he received but little benefit from the governor's remittance on account of the mismanagement of his agents.

The unsettled conditions of the West; the intermeddling of the French and English, and the treacherous contumacy of Spain, all combined to foster plots and intrigues of varied character. Dorchester, the Governor of Canada, thought he saw a chance for gaining some of the territory lost by the treaties of Utrecht and Aix La Chapelle, and of pushing the

claims of Great Britain to the Gulf of Mexico. Accordingly, a deputy by the name of Connally set out through the wilderness from Detroit, in the autumn of 1788. He was authorized to equip two Kentucky regiments with arms, ammunition, money, and provisions, if they would join in the conquest of Louisiana. A fleet from Jamaica was to act in conjunction with their attack upon the upper settlements of Spain, and they were to be rewarded by the free navigation of the river.

Little encouragement was given to the enterprise. The settlers had not forgotten Dorchester's part in the Indian atrocities upon their own frontiers during the late war; and Wilkinson, whose plans were at stake, contrived to hasten the deputy's return to Canada. How he accomplished his design is best told in his own words: "In order to induce him to go back, I employed a hunter who feigned attempting his life. The pretext assumed by the hunter was the avenging the death of his son murdered by the Indians, at the supposed instigation of the English. As I hold the commission of a civil judge, it was thought, of course, to be my duty to protect him against the murderer, whom I arrested and held in custody. I availed myself of the circumstance to communicate to Connally my fear of not being able to answer for the security of his person, and I expressed my doubt whether he could

escape with his life. It alarmed him so much that he begged me to give him an escort to conduct him out of our territory, which I readily assented to do, and on the 20th of November, he recrossed the Ohio on his way back to Detroit."

The intrigues of Edward C. Genet, Minister of the French Republic to the United States, were of a higher-handed character than any that have hitherto been mentioned. He arrived at Charleston, South Carolina, in April, 1793, and was accorded a hearty reception, on account of the friendship of the Americans for his countrymen, and their sympathy for the Revolutionists in their trouble with England and her hated ally, Spain. Their enthusiasm led him to believe that they were ready to enter into his schemes of privateering against the one, and filibustering in the territory of the other. He made inflammatory speeches in the larger cities; bestirred himself to fit out privateers in the sea-coast towns, that were to prey on English commerce; dispatched Lachaise and Michaux to Kentucky to co-operate with George Rogers Clark in organizing an expedition on the Ohio that was to proceed against Louisiana. Kentucky was to be the principal recruiting ground, and Clark, stung by the ingratitude of the government, and his shabby treatment by Virginia, the prime mover of the enterprise. All who

would join him were promised one thousand acres of land; if they enlisted for one year, two thousand; and for two years or more, three thousand. The officers were to be awarded in due proportion, and to rank according to the number of men each enlisted. On this basis, recruits were gathered; boats, stores and ammunition collected, and the alarm sounded for war.

Washington, who had proclaimed neutrality, scented the danger of the situation from the beginning, and lost no time in demanding Genet's recall. General Wayne, impressed by the necessity for action, hastily erected a fort near the mouth of the Ohio, to intercept the expedition. But Clark's army never started. The French government, on receiving Washington's demand, ordered the return of its Jacobin minister; the French Consul at Boston was expelled, and the whole movement collapsed.

These various plots and counter-plots were not alone the making of the men whose names they bear, but the manifestation of a mighty spirit struggling for outgrowth, for expansion. They were alike the precursors of a more formidable movement, and the aggressive temper of the Westerners; the unsettled conditions under which they wrought and builded, and the doubtful loyalty of some of their leaders, were the means by which it was to be prosecuted.

CHAPTER VI

A MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY

FROM the presiding chair of the Senate Chamber to the outer world is but a few steps, but when taken by Aaron Burr for the last time, he appears as if fallen from some dizzy height. His influence was broken; his means were squandered; Richmond Hill had been sold to pay his debts, and still his creditors clamored, unsatisfied. An indictment for killing Hamilton had been found against him in New Jersey, but his friends had exerted their influence in his behalf, and he had not been molested. But he could not return to either his native or adopted state. In a letter written from Philadelphia, whither he had gone direct from Washington, he says: "In New York, I am to be disfranchised, and in New Jersey, hanged. Having substantial objections to both, I shall not, for the present, hazard either, but shall seek another country."

This resolve was not born of the impulse of a moment. He realized that his enemies were securely intrenched in the high places of the government.

Jefferson was just entering upon his second term as President, while George Clinton occupied his old seat as Vice-President. It was evident that the East was closed to conquest. Not so, the West. Beyond the mountains lay a land of promise—a new world with its network of noble rivers; its broad-bosomed valleys; its swarming settlements; its restless energy; its coloring of romance; its borderlands of adventure. A more inviting field for his talents could not well be imagined. For, although shorn of place and power, did he not still retain the means by which they had been won: the fertile brain; the cunning hand; the resourceful will? He was only forty-nine years old. What might he not yet accomplish? He talked of land speculations on the Washita. His friends counseled a return to Congress from Tennessee. His enemies hinted of dark designs in other quarters in contemplation. All the world was on the *qui vive*, when Aaron Burr turned his face westward in 1805.

His objective point seems, to himself, not to have been altogether certain; for he writes his daughter, a month before setting out, that this journey might lead him to New Orleans, perhaps farther. The object of this tour, or "objects," as he has it, whatever they might have been, were not, as he assures us, of "mere curiosity," but "an operation of business, which prom-

ises to render the tour both useful and agreeable."

Arriving at Pittsburg on April 29th, he found the boat he had ordered prepared, in readiness. The next morning, in company with Gabriel Shaw, he embarked on his voyage down the Ohio. After floating a day and a half, he overtook Mathew Lyon, an old friend, and member of Congress from Tennessee, now on his way home from Washington. It was Mathew Lyon, who had first suggested that Burr should settle at Nashville; begin the practice of law; attend the courts; offer to serve the district, and thus secure his return to Congress. But Burr, from the first, appears to have manifested but little interest in the business.

Glad to relieve the monotony of so long a voyage, the travelers lashed their boats together and floated along in company, as was the fashion of the time. On May 3rd, they "went on shore in the skiff, letting the ark float on, to see the town of Weeling—sometimes erroneously spelled Wheeling—a pretty, neat village, well situated on the south bank, containing sixty or eighty houses."

They reached Marietta on the morning of the 5th. "After breakfast," he remarks, "several gentlemen of the town came in to offer me civilities and hospitalities. We have been walking several miles to see

the mounds, parapets, squares, and other remains of unknown antiquity, which are found in this neighborhood. I am astonished and confounded, totally unsatisfied with the conjectures of others, and unable to repose on any plausible one of my own."

At Marietta, the two boats parted company, and Burr, with only Shaw for a traveling companion, resumed his journey down the river. That afternoon they passed Wood County Court House, and landed on the Island of Blennerhassett, as already recorded, and on the 11th of the month arrived at Cincinnati. A day was spent as the guest of Senator John Smith, general store-keeper and army contractor. Here, he also met General Dayton, late Senator from New Jersey, and other old army friends. In the evening he hastened on to Louisville, then known as the Falls of the Ohio, where he again caught up with Mathew Lyon. At the "Falls," the ark was ordered on to the mouth of the Cumberland, and Burr taking to land, proceeded on horse-back to Frankfort.

He had received marked attention ever since crossing the Alleghanies; in Kentucky, he was regarded with still greater favor; but in Nashville, whither he came by way of Lexington, the people vied with each other in doing him honor. He had championed the cause of Tennessee, in 1796, when the Federalists were

delaying her admission into the Union, and now her citizens, in their turn, feasted and lionized him; but nothing was said about congressional aspirations. During his four days' stay in Nashville, he was the guest of General Andrew Jackson, characterized by Burr as "Once a lawyer; after a judge; now a planter,—a man of intelligence—and one of those frank, ardent souls, whom I love to meet."

On Monday, June 3rd, he embarked in an open boat, provided by his host, and floated down the Cumberland two hundred and thirty miles to its mouth, where he found his ark, which had come down the Ohio. At Fort Massie, he met General Wilkinson, who was to have joined him at Pittsburg, but being delayed had descended the Ohio in his wake.

Wilkinson was Burr's oldest friend in the West. They had both seen much of life, and passed through many checkered experiences since, together, they climbed the heights of Quebec. But the lapse of thirty years had not subdued the ambition of either. Wilkinson had lately been appointed by Jefferson as Governor of the newly acquired territory of Louisiana, and was now on his way to St. Louis, the new capital of the territory proper. He also claimed to be interested with Dayton, Smith, and others in a project to dig a canal around the Falls of the Ohio, and had

stopped at Cincinnati to consult with them regarding the matter.

Four days went by before Burr left Fort Massie. When he again set out, it was on board an elegant barge, fitted up for him by General Wilkinson, with sails and colors, and manned by ten faithful soldiers and a sergeant. In seven days he came to Natchez, leaving about eight hundred miles behind. For the next three hundred miles he passed through a settled country, and often relieved the tedium of the journey by taking breakfast or dinner at the homes of the gentlemen on shore. On the 25th of June, the barge made its final landing, and Burr stepped ashore on the levee of New Orleans. He had heard many pleasant stories of the place while *en route*, but he found it even more interesting than he had anticipated. Its fortified angles defended a city of nine thousand inhabitants; its levees were enlivened by the constant arrival of river flat-boats, while some three hundred sea-going vessels annually cast their moorings within its harbor.

Burr carried with him a letter of introduction from Wilkinson to Daniel Clark, an influential citizen, and the chief merchant of the city.

“My dear Sir:—This will be delivered to you by Colonel Burr, whose worth you know well how to

estimate. If the persecutions of a great and honorable man can give title to generous attentions, he has claim to all your civilities and all your services. You cannot oblige me more than by such conduct, and I pledge my life to you it will not be misapplied. To him I refer you for many things improper to letter, and which he will not say to any other."

The letter was presented and its bearer received with the distinction due his rank, and something more. A grand dinner was given in his honor—ball and banquet followed—all was gaiety and good cheer. Burr was charmed by their hospitality, and especially with the French atmosphere of the place.

"The mark of attention with which I have been most flattered," writes he to Theodosia, "is a letter from the holy sisters, the Ursuline nuns, congratulating me on my arrival. Having returned a polite answer to this letter, it was intimated that the saints had a desire to see me. The Bishop conducted me to the cloister. We conversed at first through the grates; but presently I was admitted within, and passed an hour with them greatly to my satisfaction. None of that calm monotony which I expected. All was gaiety, wit, and sprightliness. Saint A. is a very accomplished lady. In manners and appearance, a good deal like Mrs. Merry. All except two, appear to be past

thirty. They were dressed with perfect neatness; their veils thrown back. We had a repast of wine, fruit and cakes. I was conducted to every part of the building. All is neatness, simplicity, and order. At parting, I asked them to remember me in their prayers, which they all promised with great promptness and courtesy—Saint A. with earnestness."

Notwithstanding the existing factions in the city, his tact and address gave him comparatively clear sailing; and after a fortnight had flown, he bid his friends good-bye, promising to return the next fall, and took up his journey back to Natchez overland. Crossing Lake Pontchartrain, he took a guide and pressed on northward, reaching Natchez in four days. Here he tarried a week, and for the gay pleasures of that interval, remarks that he saw tears of regret when he took his departure. The 6th of August found him again domiciled under the hospitable roof of General Jackson—a welcome retreat after traversing the four hundred and fifty weary miles of wilderness that lay between Natchez and Nashville. He met with the same cordial reception as on his first visit, and as a special tribute, a public dinner was spread in his honor. A week slipped by, and he moved on to Lexington, where he remained until the end of the month. On August 31st, he took his departure for

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Frankfort, where he was lavishly entertained at the home of John Brown, a prominent politician.

While touring Kentucky, the people of that commonwealth and their neighbors to the south were again aroused by the news of trouble with the Spaniards at Baton Rouge, a post still retained by them, though principally occupied by Americans. From the time Burr had made his appearance in the Mississippi Valley, there had been whisperings, communications, and conjectures; and by this time the impression had obtained that his western excursion was, in some way, connected with the Spanish imbroglio. At Nashville, he had been hailed as a kind of liberator, who was expected to scourge their border from Spanish aggression, and speeches were made and toasts were drank, which voiced no uncertain sentiments.

On September 2d, he was once more on the Ohio. From the Falls, he made a detour to consult again with Wilkinson, who, on July 4th, had entered upon his duties as Governor at St. Louis. Just what passed between them will never be known. Wilkinson afterwards testified that Burr seemed to have conceived some great project, the nature of which he did not disclose. All kinds of rumors were in the air. Wilkinson received a letter from Daniel Clark of New Orleans dated September 7th, informing him that there were

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many wild reports in circulation there respecting the late Vice-President. Among others, that Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and a part of Georgia and Carolina, were to be bribed with the plunder of the Spanish countries on the west to separate from the Union; that Wilkinson was spoken of as Burr's right-hand man; that Clark was supposed to be combined with them; that these reports had reached the ears of the Spaniards, and that, as he was just on the point of setting off for Vera Cruz, he feared that he might get into a hobble in consequence of Spanish jealousy.

After a week's sojourn with Wilkinson, Burr left St. Louis for Vincennes, the capital of Indiana territory, taking with him a letter to the Governor, William Henry Harrison. From this point, he set off on his return to Washington. He ascended the Ohio during the balmy days of October. On his way up, he called again at Blennerhassett's Island, but was doomed to disappointment, as the master and mistress were absent on a visit to the East. A few days later, he bid adieu to the West, apparently indifferent to the sensation his coming had created. The region he had left was fairly in a turmoil of excitement and expectation. The whisperings and undertones had grown in volume and compass; secret counsels of closets and conclaves were now proclaimed from hilltop and

valley. It was asserted that he had engaged the adventurous and enterprising young men from the Atlantic states to Louisiana; that an immediate convention would be called from the states bordering on the Ohio and Mississippi to form a separate government; that aided by British ships and forces he was to engage in the reduction of Mexico, by granting liberty to its inhabitants and seizing on its treasures. This was only part of the program. Other undertakings equally extravagant were averred to be on foot, and his real purpose was so distorted and obscured in the labyrinth, that it has been in question ever since.

Burr himself contributed no small measure in complicating the tangle, by surrounding the whole affair with an inscrutable air of mystery. This may have been intentional; it was, at any rate, characteristic. His faculty of secretiveness was abnormally developed. When a student in college, he formed the habit of corresponding with his sister and intimate friends in cipher, a practice he still observed. In many other ways he managed to enshroud his actions with a veil of secrecy; till, in time, a credulous public came to regard him as a being of unfathomable purposes, whose movements were all marked by mystery; and this journey through the West was far from being an exception.

He reached Washington in the month of November; dined with the President; gave him an account of his tour to New Orleans, and on his part learned, much to his regret, that the war seriously threatened against Spain the month previous was, at least for the time, not likely to take place.

CHAPTER VII

A PACKET OF LETTERS

THE gray dusk of a December evening had settled down between the ranges of wood-crowned hills, which rise like massive ramparts on either side of the Ohio Valley. The incoming Frost-King had already asserted his sovereignty over wind and wave. His intangible presence could be felt in the chill air and the penetrating touch of the mist rising from the river; in the wintry blast that wailed amid the withered branches of the forest trees, and rustled among the seared leaves that in the autumn had fallen on the dark mold below. The muffled murmur of the river had grown sharper and clearer; its harmony accentuated by a dynamic rhythm that rose and fell as the little surges lashed the shore of the "island beautiful," and as rapidly receded into the current that bore them onward toward the great "Father of Waters."

On the "Island," all was bustle and activity, consequent on the home-coming of the Blennerhassetts. Servants, white and black, skipped and scurried, hither and thither. Fires crackled and sparkled on

ample hearths; candles gleamed and sputtered in silver sconces, the warmth and glow penetrating every nook and cranny. From the kitchen were wafted savory odors, sorely tempting to sharpened appetites, while the light, which occasionally streamed through an open door-way, revealed the goodly cheer within, in marked contrast to the gathering gloom without.

What comfort! What luxury! What refinement had been gathered within these walls that had risen in the wilderness! The wide hall, with its heavy paneled doors of polished black walnut, opened on one side into a spacious parlor, which in its construction was especially adapted to the harmonies of voice and harpsichord. Its lofty ceiling was ornamented with a beautiful plaster cornice, with gilded moulding; the somber frescoes and the dark marbled walls, harmonizing with the rich Turkey carpet and furniture of heavy mahogany and rosewood. Over the large circular table occupying the center of the room, hung a costly lamp of Oriental workmanship. On the walls were portraits of the master and mistress of the mansion, and of their distinguished Irish friends, Robert and Thomas Addis Emmet, together with other well-executed pieces by artists of established reputation, while some were the handy-work of the talented mistress herself. The fire-place was enclosed with



Harman Blennerhassett

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dark, polished marble. Above it on the mantel, a sculptured, glass-covered time-piece occupied the place of honor, flanked by vases of chaste design, and colored with purple and gold. Dainty laces draped the windows, and silver knobs ornamented the doors. Across the hall was the drawing-room, paneled with walnut, and adorned with costly mirrors and paintings. The furniture in this room was more light and airy, and the carpets and ornamentations, gayer and warmer in color than in the parlor. Folding doors gave admittance in the rear to the dining-room, handsomely furnished, and with side-boards graced with a generous supply of cut glass and silver. On the second floor were the old-fashioned bed-chambers, with their ponderous steeds of carved mahogany, and their wealth of snowy linen and damask curtains. Then there was the library; the musical instruments; the right wing with its offices and laboratory, and the left with its staff of dusky house-servants. Everywhere was evidence of unstinted outlay, but all subdued and chastened by artistic taste and harmonizing effect.

Supper over, Harman Blennerhassett sat in his easy chair in the great drawing-room—a courtier, dignified, reserved, and polished with the arts and attainments of a foreign land. He was well versed in law and literature, and it is said his memory was so retentive that

he could repeat the whole of Homer's Iliad in the original Greek. He was passionately fond of music; could play the violin and violoncello, and was the author of many musical compositions. He delighted in scientific experiments, and had a good knowledge of medicine and surgery. He was about six feet in stature, slender in physique, and with shoulders slightly stooping. The fitful firelight fell on his amiable face and curling hair, revealing a well-formed expansive forehead, indicative of more than ordinary capacity. His cheek-bones were high; his eyes, large, full, blue in color, but unfortunately affected by near-sightedness. His nose was prominent, chin rounded, but lacking determination. Altogether, it was a serious, generous, good-natured, but somewhat passive face, wanting in some measure the characteristics that give force, and practical application to native ability. His dress was of the prevailing English fashion, including the broad-collared coat of cloth, satin waist-coat, knee-breeches, silk stockings, and silver-buckled shoes. When about his work, his attire was rather *negligee*; and in winter he wore a thick woollen jacket instead of the velvet or broad-cloth coat.

His wife wore a becoming gown, cut, fashioned, and furbelowed in the approved style of the time. She was above the ordinary height, but of symmetrical

figure, and captivating grace; every motion characterized by a charming decision and becoming dignity. Her face was of an oval type, resting lightly on a neck, delicately arched with the gracefulness of a deer. Her skin was clear and soft, and her complexion fresh and ruddy. The forehead was high, and rounding where it disappeared behind a mass of warm, brown hair. Her eyes were dark-blue and shaded by heavy lashes; nose slightly curved, and square-cut at the tip. There was a fullness at the corners of the mouth, and the semblance of a pout upon the lips. The general expression was that of versatility as well as availability of talent, coupled with a generous, vivacious, and affectionate nature.

Judging from the luxurious surroundings; the devotion of man and wife; the reports that had been received from the servants on their return; the fact that one of the boys, whose sickness during their absence had been the occasion of much anxiety, had recovered; from any and all the auspicious conditions apparent, it appeared that Fortune had searched for every gift within her domain; had gladdened with every smile she could bestow, the favored dwellers of this Island realm. But behind her smiles and the seeming substantiality of appearances, there always lurks the uncertainty of their continuance; the transient dura-

tion of things circumscribed by the element of time; the mocking vanity of everything pertaining to this Earth-world. There was a troubled look on the face of Harman Blennerhassett, which was soon communicated to that of his wife Margaret; for of her he now sought counsel. She was the one in whom he always confided; the stay on which he always leaned for support; the motive power that alone could move him to action. He might plan, but she could execute. He might predict, but she could bring things to pass. Need it be said that Blennerhassett, though a scholar and scientist, was also an idealist and dreamer, seeking retirement from the world of fact, that he might revel unmolested in the realm of fancy. But the actual is always and everywhere insistent in asserting its right for consideration in the affairs of men. Unwitnessed by them, the curtain had already fallen on the first scene of a drama, that in the last act was to go down on the ruin of their home and the destruction of their happiness forever.

The long and tedious journey to the East had been taken to pay a visit to their friend Thomas Addis Emmet, a brother of the distinguished Irish patriot, Robert Emmet. Mr. Emmet had lately arrived from the "old country," and after spending some weeks with him in New York, they returned by way

of Baltimore, where they visited General Devereux, a member of another famous Irish family. On arriving at home, Blennerhassett had found in his office, along with other mail that had accumulated, three letters of special import. Owing to the slow and irregular means of communication, they had probably been a long time on the way, although it was evident they had lain in the office for some time. Two of them, dated August 13th and 18th respectively, 1805, were written by Hon. James Brown, of New Orleans, and their contents related to circumstances that had clouded temporarily at least, their outlook upon life's horizon.

It seems that some time previous, the son of an old acquaintance in Ireland, by the name of Hart, had arrived in this country, bearing a letter of introduction from his father to Blennerhassett. The respectability of his parents and his gentlemanly address procured him a welcome, as he had anticipated. He informed Blennerhassett that before sailing for America, he had, on the advice of Sir Owen Hunt, procured drafts for one thousand pounds on a house in Boston; but on arriving learned that the house was fictitious, and as a result, he now found himself in a strange land without any available funds. The story was plausible on its face, and Blennerhassett, whose unsuspecting nature made him an easy prey for the designing, eager

to assist the young man, and render some substantial remembrance of his father, furnished him with letters of introduction and credit to some of his most distinguished acquaintances in the West, including Mr. Brown above mentioned. It turned out that young Hart, who was a consummate rascal, had forged the letter of introduction from his father, who some time before had discarded him. With his benefactor's letters of credit, he proceeded to make hay while the sun shone, obtaining a considerable sum of money—some four thousand dollars in all—and then fled for Canada.

Brown in his letters attempted to justify himself in the action he had taken to supply Hart with funds, but Blennerhassett, now satisfied that the swindler had altered his figures, in a letter written the next day, hastened to assure him that he need not fear losing anything, as he stood ready to reimburse him to the last dollar he was worth.

The remaining letter of the packet was addressed in a neat and slightly feminine hand. On breaking the seal, Blennerhassett found it was from Colonel Burr. It began by expressing regret that he had been deprived of the pleasure of meeting Blennerhassett on account of the latter's absence from home when he had visited the Island on his return from New Orleans. On its face, there appeared to be nothing

out of the ordinary. It was just such a letter that a friendly and far-seeing mind would indict to show its appreciation of the talent, and to suggest direction in another. In a guarded manner, he referred to the secluded pleasures by which Blennerhassett was surrounded, and insinuated that their enervating influence tended to effeminate the mind; that he should aspire to a career that would afford active employment for his talents; that his family deserved superior advantages to those found in the new and unpolished society of his neighborhood; that the world was wide, and that he should go forth in quest of wealth and distinction.

The picture was sketched by a master hand, and from whatever point it was viewed by the flickering lights on that December night, its outline, perspective, and suggestive details, were acknowledged to be true and convincing. Such apparently disinterested advice from one of Colonel Burr's rank, not only flattered the Blennerhassetts, but proved to be the means of arousing the husband and father from the lethargy that had held him for years, to what he believed to be his duty to himself and family. In the letter he wrote to Brown the next day, he mentioned that the present state of his affairs might induce him to abandon books and science for a time, and inquired

as to what opportunities were offered in his locality, either in mercantile or professional lines.

In answer to Burr's communication, he informed him that his family's interest, he felt, would again call him into more active employment; that if he could sell or let his establishment, he could move forward with more confidence in any undertaking that Burr's sagacity might open for profit or fame.

“Having thus advised you of my desire and motives to pursue a change of life or engage in anything which may suit my circumstances, I hope, sir, you will not regard it indelicate in me to observe to you how highly I should be honored in being associated with you, in any contemplated enterprise you would permit me to participate in. The amount of means I could at first come forward with would be small. You might command my services as a lawyer, or in any other way you should suggest as being most useful. I could, I have no doubt, unite the talents and energy of two of my particular friends, who would share in any fortune which might follow you. The gentlemen alluded to are Mr. Dudley Woodbridge, junior, of Marietta, and Mr. Devereux, of Baltimore, a *ci-devant* general in the Irish rebel army, either of whom, it is proper to remark, could be prevailed upon to enlist in the undertaking.

“ Not presuming to know or to guess at the intercourse, if any, subsisting between you and the present government, but viewing the probability of a rupture with Spain, the claim for action the country will make upon your talents, in the event of an engagement against or subjugation of, any of the Spanish territories, I am disposed in the confidential spirit of this letter to offer you my friends', and my own services to co-operate in any contemplated measures in which you may embark.”

He also wrote to his friend, Devereux, requesting him to find a purchaser or lessee for the Island, as his present embarrassment disposed him to let or sell the place, that he might by changing his location engage in mercantile pursuits or resume the profession of law. He described the farm as “containing about two hundred acres of the richest land in the world, opposite the handsome settlement of Belpre, fourteen miles below Marietta, and within view of Wood County Court House in Virginia; in the midst of a country where the lumber and provision trade, with ship-building has commenced, and will be established above and below it, from Pittsburg to the Falls of the Ohio. If the style and extent of the house should be demanded, it may be stated as highly and completely finished, containing with the wings connected to it by circular corridors, thirty-six windows, glazed with

lights, twelve by eighteen inches. The house and offices I occupy stand me in upward of thirty thousand dollars, not to mention gardens and shrubbery, in the English style, hedges, post-fences, and complete farm-yards, containing barns, stables, overseer's and negroes' houses, etc.; though for the sake of removing from a place which does not now so well suit myself, I would sacrifice somewhat of the money I have expended."

It must not be inferred from this correspondence that Blennerhassett was compelled to sell the Island, or that all he possessed was invested in it for such was not the case. After completing the mansion, some years before, he had \$9,000 stock and profits in his Marietta business, \$5,000 to \$6,000 in the hands of his Philadelphia agent, about \$2,000 on other account, five negroes, besides the Island and its improvements, which if selling at \$50,000, he wrote, would lose him money. The truth is the leaven had already begun to work; the letter of Burr was beginning to produce precisely the effect desired. Blennerhassett now saw that his fortune was surely being depleted, when according to the numerical increase of his household it should increase in the same proportion. So he began to cast about for some enterprise, whereby he might regain, if possible, the riches that on unguarded occasions had taken to themselves wings and flown away.

CHAPTER VIII

TOWARD THE SUNSET

THERE are long lapses of uninterrupted happiness in some lives, that flow on like the unbroken reaches of a great river. When suddenly, and without warning, a break in the "noiseless tenor of their way," stirs their depths into a seething current, that sweeps them with irresistible force into the breakers beyond.

Eight years had passed away since Harman Blennerhassett had first set foot upon the island which now bears his name. Emigrating from a land distracted with revolution, he had sought for a haven, where his adventurous bark might find a mooring, undisturbed by turmoil and strife; and here, as he often said, he hoped to rest his bones forever. These years of self-inflicted exile had been filled with undisturbed repose; each one bringing him nearer the realization of his dreams; each one crowning anew the work of his hands. He saw the trees he had planted arrive at maturity; the fruit he had nurtured grow to perfection; the flowers he had cultivated spring into fragrant life; the crops he had husbanded fill his barns to over-

flowing; the island he loved grow more beautiful each returning season, until it was acknowledged to be the finest country seat west of the Alleghany mountains. Notwithstanding his prosperity, there always appeared to be some undefined mystery surrounding him and his island home, and various were the conjectures regarding him and his former life. But he was not, as it has often been asserted, a political refugee; other causes having combined in his relinquishment of hereditary titles, and the renouncement of kindred ties that had bound him to the land of his fathers.

Harman Blennerhassett was the scion of a distinguished English family, that could trace its lineage back to King Edward III. The ancestral manor-house of Flimby Hall was situated in the County of Cumberland, where its massive walls with their crests of stone still grimly defy the corroding tooth of time. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Thomas Blennerhassett and his son Robert went forth from its great door-way across the sea to the County of Kerry in Ireland. Here Harman's grandfather, Robert, became the progenitor of three branches of Irish gentry. The first son became the proprietor of Ballyseedy; the second, of Conway Castle, both in the County of Kerry, while the third established himself in the County of Limerick. Conway Blennerhassett, of

Conway Castle, Killorglin, was the father of three sons and five daughters. Harman, the youngest son, was born either in 1764 or '65, his father and mother never coinciding as to the year, though they agreed upon the day, fixing it on the 8th of October. His birth occurred while his parents were on a visit in Hampshire, England. At an early age, he was placed in the celebrated school of Westminster, and was afterwards graduated with honor from Trinity College, Dublin. Being the youngest son, he knew his future was largely a matter of his own making, the patrimonial mantle and estates falling as the portion of the eldest. He accordingly chose the profession of the law, which at that time was invested with an aristocratic dignity, and also offered a sure road to fortune and political preferment. He was therefore entered as an apprentice in the study of the law at the King's Inns, at the Michaelmas term, 1790. At the age of twenty-five, he completed his studies, and set out for a tour of the Continent.

It was a time of strange unrest in the history of the world. There were sullen mutterings of discontent at home and roaring whirlwinds of revolution abroad. It was indeed a critical time in the life of all Europe. The unexpected triumph of the American colonies over the mother country had unsettled the long established policies of nations; and monarchs

trembled in their impotency to check the fires of liberty, that everywhere threatened to blaze into a conflagration. France, the mighty maelstrom of this disturbance, was rocked by Titanic convulsions. The frowning Bastille, stained with blood and tears, deluged with fire and musketry, its very stones crying out for retribution, had fallen. The King; the members of the National Assembly; and Lafayette, in the name of the National Guard, in the presence of five hundred thousand of their countrymen, had taken an oath to support the new Constitution. After witnessing its adoption, Blennerhassett returned to his own country in time to escape the awful storm that swept away the last vestige of feudalism, sacrificed the life of Louis XVI., spread a "reign of terror" that horrified the civilized world, and embroiled France in war with the allied powers of Europe.

The time was opportune for the making of a great military career, but Blennerhassett's inclinations were literary rather than warlike. While taking a lively interest in the stirring events of the time, he, nevertheless, managed to steer clear of political complications and party strife. Not so, however, of matrimonial entanglements. At the age of thirty-one, he contrived to fall desperately in love with a bright and beautiful girl of eighteen, named Margaret Agnew. She was

the daughter of Captain Robert Agnew, of the County of Durham, England, and a son of the celebrated general, James Agnew, who fell at Germantown during the Revolution. They were married in England, and having decided to emigrate to America, Blennerhassett proceeded to dispose of his father's estate, to which he had succeeded on the death of his brothers, John and Thomas. He sold his lands to one of his relatives, Thomas Mullins, afterward, Lord Ventry, for which he is said to have received \$160,000, and at once set about making his preparations for departing. Having provided himself in London with a large library, chemical and philosophical apparatus, and all other equipments deemed necessary for use in their new home, Harman and his young bride set sail for America. Their voyage was beset with various vicissitudes of calm and storm, and it was not until seventy-three days had elapsed after leaving Gravesend, that they landed at New York, on the 1st of August, 1796.

They went ashore with conflicting emotions of joy and regret. Regret, because so wide a space as the broad Atlantic separated them from the old home and friends they had left behind; joy, because so grand a barrier interposed between them and the malevolence of their enemies; for enemies they had, though not of a political sort. These reflections, however, soon gave

way to more happy sensations, awakened by the novelty of their situation. The land was young; the climate kindly; their enterprise romantic, and they surrendered themselves unreservedly to the enjoyment of their new life. They took lodgings on the Hudson, but finding the heat of New York, at this season of the year, oppressive, and the handling of the mosquitoes, that came over from the Jersey shore, intolerable, they joined a party on Long Island. The place was about twelve miles distant from the city. A handsome house, with a roomy balcony had been built on the shore, and they found the situation so cool and pleasant; the breeze so fresh and invigorating that they concluded to remain until the last of the month. During their stay, the young wife manifested great interest in their surroundings, the scenery, the fashions, and the various domestic economies with which she came in contact. While thus engaged, her husband was learning all he could about the soil, the productions, the land values, the trend of political affairs, and whatever else would naturally attract the attention of a new arrival. He was a close observer of men and events, and his writings give an interesting and faithful portrayal of the conditions which prevailed in this country at that time.

He was especially interested in the emigration

westward. That part of the "Territory South of the Ohio," known as the Tennessee country had been admitted during the last session of Congress. Its northern neighbor, Kentucky, admitted four years before, was also attracting large numbers of settlers. Captivated by the description of the country, Blennerhassett determined to set out on this track, with a view of exploring Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Miami country, and returning through the wilderness to Virginia, provided his fancy was not arrested by some settlement in the meantime. In passing through New Jersey, they stayed for a few days at Newark, and also improved the opportunity of visiting the Passaic Falls, a few miles distant. They passed over the memorable battlefields of Trenton and Princeton, and on arriving at Philadelphia were much impressed with the English stir and activity. In the autumn, they continued their journey westward by coach, crossing the Alleghanies to Pittsburg, as the Massachusetts' Puritans had done eight years before. Here, they took passage on a keel-boat, soon arriving at the settlement they had founded at the mouth of the Muskingum, and named Marietta, in honor of the unhappy queen, Marie Antoinette.

They received a warm welcome at the hands of the settlers, and were no less impressed with the culture and

refinement in evidence, than by the simplicity and hospitality of these sturdy New England folk. They were moreover charmed by the magnificent river scenery, and the evident possibilities of this new land, and as a result, decided to abandon the contemplated explorations, and locate in this inviting section. The winter slipped away in visitations, excursions, and occasional reconnoissances for a desirable residence location. There was a hill back of the town, commanding a long reach of river-view and landscape, on the summit of which Blennerhassett contemplated building a castle of "old country" design, but finally gave up the idea, on account of the difficult ascent.

Situated near Belpre (beautiful meadow), fourteen miles below, was a long, narrow, dual island—the uppermost and lower portion being joined by a neck, known as the Narrows. Opposite the Narrows, on the Ohio shore, stood a stockade inclosing two acres, with cabins garrisoned by pioneers from New England. It was the largest of three defenses erected in this vicinity; and no doubt, Blennerhassett while visiting here was first attracted to the spot, that was destined to bear his name down through the centuries.

There is a tradition that Washington in his tour down the Ohio, in 1770, marked this island as his own. But if so, in the stirring events which followed, he,

like many others, failed to make the required record, and his "tomahawk" right lapsed. There were several other claimants, before its purchase by Blennerhassett was entered on the records of the log court house at the "Point." On May 15th, 1786, the island was granted to Alexander Nelson, of Richmond, by virtue of a patent signed by Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, in trust for Nelson, Heron, & Co. On the 17th of March the following year, it was conveyed to James Heron, of Norfolk, one of the members of the firm, who on May 10th, 1782, conveyed the two islands, equal to 566 acres to Elijah Backus for 250 pounds, Virginia currency. In March, 1798, Backus contracted to sell Blennerhassett the upper part of the Island for \$4,500. It embraced about 170 acres, and was bounded as follows: "On the North, East, and South by the waters of the Ohio River to the part of said Island called the Narrows, and then by a line immediately crossing said island at the said Narrows, as per survey made by Messrs. Foster and Bent, about the month of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-eight."

The legal verbiage of the musty records gives no hint of the attractiveness of this sequestered realm. Environed by picturesque hills that shut out all the world, its only approach was by the shining gates of

the river that girt it in. It was at this time clothed in all its primeval beauty. Giant forest trees towered above the coppiced wildwood, where in springtime the birds sang their trilling roundelays; where the fragrance of flowers and the sweet scent of the mold was wafted away like incense from some perfumed censer. Here the wild deer wandered at will, and the chattering squirrels ceased from play to slumber in leafy hammocks flung over the murmuring waters. Tendrilled vines of wild grape and climbing creeper threw trailing festoons from tree to tree in wild profusion. Through this emerald canopy, the sun-rays crinkled down into the shadowy aisles below, weaving checkered patterns, like the mosaics of some grand cathedral, along the secluded naves and winding avenues of this magnificent temple of nature.

There was a blockhouse situated near the head of the Island, that had been built years before by Captain James as a retreat from the Indians. To this primitive abode, Blennerhassett now brought his lovely wife and their first-born son, Dominick.

In this wilderness drama, Lady Blennerhassett was fated to play no unworthy part. Strong in spirit; of a cheerful disposition; active in mind and body; she entered upon her role with a zest and vigor that was worthy of the time and place. She was endowed with

an unusual combination of talents that had been cultivated by judicious training. She was a skillful musician, and a brilliant conversationalist; besides the English, speaking French and Italian with ease and fluency. Well versed in history and literature, she exhibited an inclination for poetic composition, and a taste for elocutionary attainments. An ardent Shakespearian student, she took great delight in rehearsing his plays for the entertainment of her friends. She had been brought up by an aunt in England, and in addition to her other accomplishments, was instructed in the various arts of housekeeping. It was her aptitude for domestic affairs, and the practical talent that adapts itself to the needs of its environment, coupled with her rare good sense, that won for her the regard of the inhabitants of this new country. She was a welcome visitor in all the settlements; joined with spirit in the festivities that attended their homely gatherings; watched by the bedside of the sick; ministered to the wants of the needy, and was the acknowledged leader of the younger set at their social functions.

Her admirers never tired of singing her praises. One tells of her physical endurance—how she could walk from ten to twenty miles, with as little inconvenience as other ladies experienced in making their

usual calls in town or city; of her wonderful agility; bounding over fences in the way, or fallen trees across her path as she carelessly pursued her journey through the forest. Another praises her superb horsemanship—relates how habited in a dress of fine scarlet cloth, trimmed with gold lace and glittering buttons; wearing a white beaver hat, ornamented with a graceful ostrich plume, she would be seen darting through the dark woods on a spirited horse; riding like a dragoon over hill and through dale, or along the river road to Marietta. Her faithful servant, Ransom Reed,—a dusky, dwarfish black, usually essayed to accompany her on such occasions, but would seldom get a glimpse of his sprightly charge, until she checked her steed to await his coming. Still another recalls her skill in rowing—sometimes taking a trip in a canoe as far as the Point; or up the Kanawha to Neal's Station, or the home of the Hendersons' at Beech Park. On these excursions, she was always attended by Moses, the sable waterman, that he might be near in case of accident.

It is stated that an intelligent lady who was intimate with her, and afterward visited the courts of England and France, said she had never beheld one who was Mrs. Blennerhassett's equal in beauty, dignity of manners, elegance of dress, and all that was lovely in the

person of woman. While it may be true that her friends and admirers sometimes unwittingly exaggerated her accomplishments, it must be admitted that she was certainly a remarkable woman. She was charitable, warm-hearted and generous; and the life of the stockade and surrounding settlements was lightened and brightened by her sunny smile, and the gentle touch of her loving hand.

Having established himself on his island domain, Blennerhassett set to work to subdue the forest that challenged his domination. In addition to the slaves he had purchased, his ready means enabled him to procure a ready force of pioneer laborers, and the unequal warfare began. It was the old story of Nature's forces contending against the inevitable supremacy of human progress. The underbrush was cleared away, and piled into great heaps, which the leaping, roaring, consuming flames reduced to beds of soft, gray ashes during the night. In the clear glow of the crisp spring mornings that followed, the contest would be renewed, and the warbling of birds would mingle with the chorus that came from the clearing, where the slaves sang as they toiled to the accompaniment of the woodmen's ringing axes. With alternating strokes, the bright steel was driven home to the very vitals of the towering monarchs of the wood, until

quivering from the splintered stump to the farthest twig, the ponderous body would totter uncertainly for a moment, then sweep to earth with a crash that would echo from hill to shore, amid the barking of dogs and shouts of men that told of victory. Day by day, Blennerhassett saw his dreams become tangible realities. The forest was cleared away, save here and there the favorite trees which were left for shade and shelter. The inequalities of the ground were leveled to uniform smoothness, or fashioned to conform to his design. A site was graded for the mansion; an excavation made for the wine-cellar, and the building was begun.

In estimating the magnitude of his undertaking, we should remember to employ relative standards. It was a primitive age, of which the log cabin is the accepted type, and the ordinary frame house of the well-to-do villager, its highest realization. What are now considered the common necessities of life, were the veriest luxuries in that day. Remote from the busy marts of trade and industry, the procuring of certain kinds of material and furnishing for building and equipment was well nigh impossible. Many things had to be imported from England, and others were only secured at fabulous prices. For instance, the old stone steps of the pier at the landing, which

have lately been unearthed, were joined with cement brought from the old country; brick was brought over as ballast, and the costly furniture and furnishing that filled the Island mansion is said to have been imported from Paris and London. It is also stated that the carpenters who built it were brought from Philadelphia, but its chief architect was Colonel Joseph Barker, of Marietta, who, in 1803, built a brigantine named Dominick, in honor of the young master of the Island.

Some two years elapsed from the time Blennerhassett moved into the blockhouse until his mansion was ready for occupation. At last, as he himself said, "It was all highly and completely finished"; and furnished, as we have seen, in exquisite taste, and with an unstinted hand. The furniture of the latest pattern, was brought from the East to Pittsburg in wagons, and thence shipped down the Ohio by keel-boat and barge to its destination, where it was installed in the great house that had been made ready for its reception.

We are assured by the historians of the time that Blennerhassetts' was the social center of the settlements in that section, but it is to be regretted that no record has been preserved of that memorable housewarming. It was certainly a noteworthy event when the Puritans from Marietta, Belpre and Farmer's

Castle, and the Cavaliers from Wood County Court House, Neal's Station, and Beech Park, met in friendly intercourse on that beautiful island of the Ohio. No other such gathering of fair women and brave men had ever before assembled, amid such luxurious surroundings in this famous valley. It would have made a picture well worthy the colors of the greatest artist in the land. The rich draperies, the somber walls, the flashing candelabra, and the antique ornamentation, serving as an appropriate background for the bevy of comely maidens, who, with sparkling eyes and smiling lips, were led in the graceful measures of the stately minuet by the charming mistress of the Isle; while ranged on either side, the long lines of admiring youths anxiously awaited their coming. Then the fun grew fast, and the merry strains of Ransom Reed's fiddle fairly leaped in excitement and crescendo as they whirled away in the mazes of the Virginia reel.

It was a season of artless mirth and genuine jollity. What songs were sung! What tales were told! What vows were made! What troths were plighted that festal night on the romantic Island! Their's was an age untrammelled by the conventionalisms and artificiality of modern life. Hospitality was open-handed; good cheer, unstinted, and friendship freely



Lovers' Lane.

given. Alas! Their time and their kind will no more return. Alas! The merry mansion and all its associations are but things of the shadowy past; and only their haunting memories and crumbling ashes remain.

CHAPTER IX

THE VOICE OF THE TEMPTER

THE spring of 1806 witnessed a renewal of Spanish hostility along the borders of Louisiana. Its boundaries were still unsettled. Jefferson claimed portions of both West Florida and the province of Texas, as part of the great domain; but his title was ignored by the Spaniards, who, much to the annoyance of the Americans, persisted in making their accustomed forays upon the disputed territory. . Most of the old posts had been surrendered; and the United States' authorities had given notice that, until a border-line had been definitely agreed upon, any new posts established or occupied east of the river Sabine, or westward, or northward of the former boundaries of West Florida, would be considered as an actual invasion of our territorial rights, and would be resisted as such. The western lands in dispute occupied some twenty-two leagues lying between the Sabine River and the Aroyo Hondo, a kind of branch or bayou to the east, about seven miles from Natchitoches, which the Spaniards claimed as the boundary line.

James Monroe, as special Envoy of the United States, had endeavored to negotiate a settlement of the differences existing between the two nations the preceding year; but unable to effect a compromise, had demanded his passports; taken leave of Carlos IV. on May 21st; written to Jefferson that all efforts at negotiation had failed, and returned to London, where he was stationed as Minister from this country. The President in reviewing the situation in his annual message to Congress, Dec. 3rd, 1805, said: "We ought still to hope that time and a correct estimate of interest, as well as of character, will produce the justice we are bound to expect. But should any nation deceive itself by false calculations, and disappoint that expectation, we must join in that unprofitable contest of trying which party can do the other the most harm. Some of these injuries may, perhaps, admit a peaceful remedy. Where that is competent, it is always the most desirable. But some of them are of a nature to be met by force only, and all of them may lead to it."

During the winter, the Spaniards bestirred themselves in strengthening their posts in the province of Texas, and advanced a small force to the old French town of Bayou Pierre, on the Red River. On the first of February, Major Porter, Commandant at Natchitoches, acting under the order of the War Department,

sent Captain Turner with sixty men to demand the evacuation of Bayou Pierre. They reached the post on the fifth of the month, and the Spaniards, twenty in number, although protesting, in a few days withdrew.

The same month, Marquis de Cassa Galvo and Don Juan Ventura Morales, the former Governor and Intendant, who were believed to be tampering with the Indians and the Spanish residents of the Territory, together with the other Spanish officers still remaining in New Orleans, were given passports by Governor Claiborne, and ordered to quit the country. He assured them that his action was rendered necessary on account of Spain rejecting the measures proposed by the United States Envoy; by the landing of reinforcements at Pensacola, and the recent aggressions on the American border. At first, they remonstrated, but filled with wrath and indignation, they at last acquiesced, taking their departure on the day fixed by the Governor. Their dismissal only tended to increase the hostility already existing. On March 15th, Claiborne received notice from Folch, the Spanish Governor of Florida, that the United States' mail would not be permitted to pass through that territory. Folch also wrote Desforgues, the French Consul at New Orleans, advising that the artillery remaining in the Territory, belonging to France, be removed to

Mobile; but the Consul refused to comply with his request without orders from his government. Word also came to Claiborne that the fortifications at Mobile were being repaired, and that Spanish emissaries were inciting the Choctaws to join in a war against the Americans. Alarmed by this information, he wrote to the President that: "The presence of a respectable force is essential to the safety of New Orleans. I suppose that, at this time, there cannot be less than two millions of dollars in this city, which, together with the merchandise in the numerous private warehouses, would furnish a rich booty for a successful enemy."

The brightness of the advancing summer failed to dispel the war-clouds that were gathering on the horizon. Few in the country doubted; and most, in the West, at least, cared less for what the outcome might be. Meanwhile, Aaron Burr had not been an idle spectator of passing events. To him a declaration of war with Spain meant an opportunity to gain glory and gold—power—everything! A chance to embark on his most cherished enterprise, of attaining his life's greatest ambition.

"Far away to the southwest, a thousand miles beyond the Mississippi, lay a vast and wealthy empire, governed by tyrants whom the people hated, and defended by troops whom soldiers should despise. For

years, the riches of that kingdom were the theme of travelers. Her mines were inexhaustible, and had flooded Europe with gold. Her nobles enjoyed the revenues of emperors; her capitol was said to be blazoned with jewels. It was known to look down on the lake, into whose waters the unhappy Guatemozin had cast the treasures of that long line of native princes, of which he was the last. Men dreamed of that magnificent city as Aladdin dreamed of his palaces, or Columbus of Cathay. Costly statues; vessels of gold and silver; jewels of untold value; troops of the fairest Indian girls for slaves; all that the eye delighted in, or the heart of man could desire, it was currently declared, would form the plunder of Mexico. A bold adventurer, commanding an army of Anglo-Saxon soldiers, could possess himself of the empire. The times were favorable to the enterprise. The priesthood throughout Mexico was disaffected, and would gladly lend its aid to any conqueror who secured its privileges; and the priesthood then, as now, exercised a paramount influence over the weak and superstitious Mexicans. America, too, was thought to be on the eve of a Spanish war, when the contemplated expedition might easily be fitted out at New Orleans. Burr saw the glittering prize and resolved to seize it, He would conquer this gorgeous realm, and realize,

in this new world, as Napoleon did in the old, a dream of romance.

"He would surround his throne with the dukes and marshals, and princes of the empire. The pomp of chivalry, the splendors of the East, should be revived in this court. Realms equally rich, and even more easy of spoil, opened to the South, to whose conquest his successors, if not himself, might aspire. Perhaps nothing would check his victorious banner until he had traversed the continent, and stood on the bold and stormy promontory, where the contending waters of the Atlantic and Pacific lash around Cape Horn."

It was a bold conception; a dream of empire worthy the genius of a Napoleon or a Charlemagne. An ambition not less daring than that which had overturned kingdoms, and rehabilitated the empires of the East. Nor was it altogether unreasonable. A down-trodden people were ready to hail a liberator, who should promise them relief from thralldom. Was not Aaron Burr equal to the occasion? Had he not proved his prowess as a military leader? Had he not demonstrated his ability to rule when presiding over the Senate of the United States? Did he not possess the presence, culture and address that would have graced the most refined courts of Europe? Surely, he of all others was just the man for such an undertaking.

During the winter, he held many secret conferences, and dispatched many mysterious messages; but it was not until the 15th of April that Blennerhassett's letter was taken from his desk, where it had lain for two months awaiting a reply. After expressing his pleasure for the confidence imposed, and his gratification that Blennerhassett was again to be restored to the world of active endeavor, he proceeds: "It is due to the frankness of your letter, to acknowledge that I had projected, and still meditate, a speculation, precisely of the character you have described. It would have been submitted for your consideration in October last, if I had then had the good fortune to find you at home. The business, however, depends, in some degree, on contingencies not within my control, and will not be commenced before December or January, if ever. From this circumstance, and as the matter, in its present state, cannot be satisfactorily explained by letter, the communication will be deferred until a personal interview can be had,—No occupation which shall not take you off the continent can interfere with that which I may propose."

The contingencies mentioned in Burr's letter might have been reduced to a declaration of war with Spain and a lack of funds for the expedition. In an intrigue with Anthony Merry, the English Minister at

Washington, he had endeavored by a pretended disaffection of the West, to wring from British coffers the gold necessary for the undertaking, but so far without success. A counter intrigue with the Marquis of Cassa, Yrujo, in which he had drawn a tangled web about the Spanish Minister, offered still less encouragement. Suppose the war should be delayed; or what if it should not occur at all? Truly there were contingencies over which he had no control. But opportunities are sometimes of men's making. Why not of Burr's? In case his national or rather international intrigues should fail, he determined to resort to private enterprise in order to raise the funds. If there were no war, or should his plans miscarry, he would provide an asylum for himself and his followers.

Such a retreat had been discovered on the banks of the river Washita. While Louisiana was still a Spanish possession, Baron de Bastrop had received a grant of about one million acres near Natchitoches. By the terms of the contract, two hundred families were to settle upon these lands within a given period. Three-fifths of this tract was conveyed to Colonel Charles Lynch, of Kentucky, for a consideration of about one hundred thousand dollars. As the time for settlement was approaching, and there being outstanding debts which he was unable to pay, Lynch

transferred his interest to Burr, who was to pay Edward Livingston the amount of the purchase price, besides giving Colonel Lynch five thousand dollars in cash, and taking up certain papers, valued at thirty thousand dollars more. Here then in the richest region of the southwest was a refuge for those who should rally about the standard of this New-World Napoleon. Something tangible with which to appeal to the sordid souls of backwoodsmen, whose practical experience had unfitted them to revel in the dream-visions of Mexico.

On July 24th, he wrote Blennerhassett as follows: "Owing to an absence of unexpected duration from this city, your letter of the 23rd of May was not received until a few days ago. My daughter has gone on to Bedford. My engagements in this city not permitting me to attend her, I shall follow in a few days, and be at your house before the 20th of August. Let me find you at home, or not far off. I propose to pass two or three days with you. My daughter was charmed with your hospitable and friendly overture, and wished much to avail herself of it. This, however, will not be in her power till October, the period of my return from Kentucky, when it is probable she may.

"I omit, till a personal interview, a further answer to your obliging letter.

"Two young gentlemen of respectable connections and character are on their way down the river, Mr. S. Swartwout, of New York and Mr. S. Ogden, of New Jersey. I have desired that they would stop at your door, hand you this, and wait long enough to answer any inquiries you might please to make about Cis-Montane men or things. I pray they may experience your wonted courtesy."

Ogden and Swartwout also bore letters for Wilkinson at St. Louis and Clark at New Orleans. They set out on July 29th, and in a few days were followed by Burr, who having so far as possible put everything in readiness, again turned westward; this time, he said, never to return. He was accompanied by Colonel Julien Dupiestre, a survivor of the French Revolution, Charles Willie, his reputed secretary, and a servant or two. Their journey over the mountains was without incident, except a halt at Bedford to visit Theodosia and her boy. On account of her health, it was determined that she should remain at the "Springs" until October.

From Pittsburg, Burr made a detour to Cannonsburg to visit an old acquaintance, Colonel George Morgan, of Morganza. Having notified Colonel Morgan of his coming the day before, he and Colonel Dupiestre were met by two of the old gentleman's sons, General

John Morgan and a younger brother, Thomas. On the way, while discussing the political situation in the West, Burr observed that, as a natural consequence, a separation of the States must ensue in four or five years. After traveling some miles, they met one of Morgan's workmen, a likely young fellow, and Burr expressed a wish that he had ten thousand like him.

At dinner, the conversation again drifted to existing conditions in the West. While the gentlemen lingered over a glass of wine, as was then the custom, Colonel Morgan dilated on the possibilities of this new country. He observed that when he first went there, that there was not a single family between the Alleghanies and the Ohio; and jocularly remarked that by and by they should have Congress sitting in the neighborhood, or in Pittsburg.

Burr, in the same bantering tone demurred: "Never," said he, "for in less than five years, you will be totally divided from the Atlantic States." He argued that the sale of Western lands was being carried to the Eastern States, and that the people of the West should not be tributary to them; that taxes were very heavy, and demanded why they should be paid to the Atlantic section of the country?

The conversation then turned upon the weakness of the federal government; and Burr's enthusiasm

led him into still greater indiscretions. He declared that great numbers were not necessary to execute great military deeds; all that was wanting was a leader who they believed could carry them through. He asserted that with two hundred men he could drive Congress, with the President at its head, into the Potomac, and that with five hundred he could take possession of New York.

After dinner, in a conversation with Thomas Morgan, who was pursuing a law course in Pittsburg, he said that John Randolph had declared on the floor of Congress that men of talents were dangerous to the government, and asked young Morgan how he would like a military expedition.

"It would depend entirely upon the object or cause for which I was to fight," was the reply.

Before closing the interview, Burr remarked, "I wish you were on the way with me."

That night, after the other members of the family had retired, he sat down by Colonel Morgan, and taking a small book from his pocket, looked at it and inquired if the Colonel knew a Spaniard by the name of Vigo at Fort Vincent.

Colonel Morgan replied that he did; that he had reason to believe that he was involved in the British conspiracy of 1788, the object of which was to separate

the States, and which General Neville and himself had suppressed. "I call it a nefarious thing," added he, "to aim at the division of the States." Whereupon Burr thrust the book in his pocket, and retired.

Early the next morning, in company with Colonel Dupiestre and General John Morgan, he rode to the town of Washington, nine or ten miles distant. Their conversation on the way dealt, for the most part, with military affairs, and Burr asked Morgan if he thought he could raise a regiment in Washington County, or with more facility in New Jersey, where he had formerly lived. From Washington, Morgan returned home, while Burr and Dupiestre proceeded to Wheeling.

Colonel Morgan and his sons believing that all was not right, in a few days invited General Neville, and Judges Tilghman and Roberts, who were holding court in the neighborhood, to dine with them. To their guests was related all that had transpired, and the gentlemen, in a joint letter communicated the information they had received to President Jefferson.

Meanwhile, Burr had arrived at Marietta. His landing was made on what he would have called an auspicious occasion. It so happened that the militia had assembled that day for their annual training, and Burr was called upon to exercise the regiment. The town and adjacent settlements were largely made up

of Revolutionary stock, including many officers. Many of the younger generation had inherited the military inclinations of their fathers, and they were charmed by the precision, energy and ease with which he put them through the evolutions. A few movements were sufficient to demonstrate his mastery of military tactics, and to convince the doubting, if such there were, of his ability to command.

A ball in the evening followed the training, and he proved himself as much at home amid the congregated beauty of the drawing-room as in the rougher element of the field. His courtliness of manner, graceful bearing, and magnetic personality, completed the conquest so well begun, and he was at once surrounded by ardent admirers, who would have followed him, if need be, to the end of the world.

It was the latter part of August when Burr, Dupiestre, and Dudley Woodbridge, of Marietta, arrived at Belpre. For the third time, Aaron Burr set foot upon Blennerhassett's Island; this time to find the Master in his mansion. Well for him had he been a thousand miles away. Burr had written the Blennerhassetts from Bedford, that they might expect him about the 23rd or 24th of the month, and they had awaited his coming in happy anticipation. They were anxious to renew their acquaintance with so distinguished a

personage; eager to learn more about the speculation mentioned in his letters; especially were they concerned about that part of the business which could not be satisfactorily explained by letter, and for which he had so long waited a personal interview to impart.

Burr lost no time in gratifying their curiosity. He told them of the Bastrop purchase; pictured in glowing colors this favored region of the Southwest; descanted on the richness of the lands along the banks of the Washita. But this was not all—beyond these, lay the mines of Mexico. This purchase was the door through which they would pass to this fabled realm of gold and glory. In this land of the orange and olive, he would establish an empire that should be the wonder of the nations; a government that should stand as a model for future generations; a system of laws, embodying the wisest and best principles of ancient and modern jurisprudence; a society of choice spirits, educated, accomplished, refined, according to the truest and highest types of culture and art; a court, rivaling in brilliancy and gaiety that of Versailles in its palmy days. In the halls of the Montezumas, should be gathered the *élite* of the empire. His ministers in foreign lands should reflect the greatness and glory of his imperial city on that far sunny plateau of the South. The Blennerhassetts should grace the proud court of

St. James; no more to hide their talents in this idealic wilderness, but to bask in the smiles and favors of royalty, on their native shores. He painted the future

“With thoughts that breathe,
And words that burn”;

and threw over all such a glamour of romance; such a bewildering array of fact and fancy, that the Blennerhassetts, willing victims of their own pitiful ambitions, were captivated, entranced—won. They entered eagerly and enthusiastically into all his plans, and the tranquil haunts of the Island were soon transformed into a scene of restless activity.

CHAPTER X

SOUNDS OF PREPARATION

COLONEL BURR arrived on the Island about noon and remained a guest of the mansion over night. The next day Blennerhassett rode with him to Marietta. While there, they called at the counting-house of Dudley Woodbridge & Company, of which firm Blennerhassett had been a member for several years past. After the usual preliminaries, he observed to Mr. Woodbridge that Colonel Burr desired to purchase a quantity of provisions; whereupon Burr made inquiry as to the price of supplies that could be had in that section. He also asked about the expense of fitting out boats, best calculated to carry such supplies up and down the river. After some conversation regarding these matters, he left a memorandum of the boats and supplies desired. There were to be fifteen boats of the Schenectady model; such as were then used on the Mohawk River. Ten were to be forty feet long and ten feet wide; five others were to be fifty feet in length. The order likewise provided for pork, flour, whiskey, bacon, and kiln-dried meal.

In payment, Burr agreed to give a draft of two thousand dollars on New York, and to settle the balance on his return, when the boats were to be delivered.

Mr. Woodbridge immediately placed a contract with Colonel Barker to furnish the boats, which were to be built up the Muskingum, about seven miles above Marietta. This attended to, he set about to purchase the provisions.

A short time afterwards, Blennerhassett handed Woodbridge the promised draft, drawn by Burr, at ninety days, on a Mr. Ogden, of New York. Woodbridge expressed his dissatisfaction at the long sight at which it was drawn, observing that it would not become due until after the time in which the boats and provisions were to be delivered.

Blennerhassett asked, with some warmth, if he doubted Colonel Burr's honor?

Woodbridge replied that he wished to run no risk.

"Then I will guarantee the draft," said Blennerhassett, "and in the event of its not being paid, you can charge it to me."

He said that he had engaged in an enterprise with Colonel Burr; that General Eaton and others were engaged in it, and that the prospects were flattering.

The next week, Woodbridge visited the Island, and Blennerhassett went into further particulars. "From

what he stated," testified Woodbridge, "I drew the inference that his object was Mexico. He did not positively say so, but I inferred from several circumstances, particularly from a map of that country, which he showed to me. He spoke highly of the country; stated its advantages, wealth, fertility and healthiness. He asked me if I had a disposition to join. I evaded his question, but could not forbear telling him that I preferred my situation to an uncertainty, which was the same as declining it. On my way up to Marietta, he observed that he did not wish me to say anything about his conversations on this subject."

Preparations for the expedition now went merrily forward. Burr had never been more active—enlisting new recruits; extending his acquaintance among the influential; agitating the war with Spain, and pushing his plans for the Washita. He visited Chillicothe, then the capital of Ohio; extended his tour to Cincinnati, where he remained the guest of Senator John Smith for several days. Crossing the Ohio into Kentucky, he made his way to Lexington, and from there continued his journey into Tennessee, and was again welcomed by General Jackson at Nashville.

The doughty general was a staunch patriot, and exacted for Burr a pledge of fealty to the Union; but he was just as bitter in his hatred of the Spaniards.

To the West, at least, a collision between the two armies that menaced each other across the Arroyo Hondo seemed imminent; and no one was more eager for the fray than Jackson. On Oct. 4th, he issued a proclamation to the Tennessee militia, reciting the aggressions of the Spaniards; calling attention to their menacing attitude, and notifying his cohorts to make ready for immediate duty. Before leaving, Burr contracted for six boats on the Cumberland, and deposited four thousand dollars with Jackson to pay for them.

Blennerhassett, in his way, was as busy as any. A kiln was erected on the Island, on which corn was dried to be ground into meal for the expedition. Recruits were enrolled for the enterprise; each was to come armed and equipped, and in addition to other considerations, was promised one hundred acres of land on the Washita. He also wrote a series of articles, under the signature of "Querist," for the "Ohio Gazette," published at Marietta. These essays argued that a peaceable separation of the States must sooner or later occur, and gave reasons for the expediency of such a course. His object seems to have been to divert rather than attract public attention to Burr's schemes against Spanish territory.

At the beginning of October, Burr's daughter, Mrs.

Alston, her husband, and little son arrived at Blennerhassett's Island. They received a warm welcome from its Master and Mistress. Madame Blennerhassett was charmed with Theodosia, of whom she wrote a little later: "I never could love another of my own sex as I do her." Little "Gamp," as he was called, also ingratiated himself with Masters Dominick and Harman, Jr., and the "white-house" grounds grew merry with the ring of childish voices. After an enjoyable visit of several days, the Alstons, accompanied by Blennerhassett, repaired by easy stages to Lexington, where they were joined by Colonel Burr; and where the Bastrop purchase was perfected, and the deeds admitted to record.

From Lexington, Blennerhassett addressed a letter, Oct. 18th, to his agents, Jos. S. Lewis & Co., Philadelphia, which ran as follows:

"Having found in this place a most valuable opportunity of participating with some friends of the first respectability and resources in the Union, in a commercial and land speculation, the prospect of effecting which depends upon my obtaining a credit with you, or some other friends, for eight or ten thousand dollars, by your honoring my drafts at sixty and ninety days, I feel no hesitation in resorting to your approved friendship for my accommodation. In order



Margaret Blennerhassett.

to supply the deficit of my actual funds, under your management, in the —— stock, I can vouch for your receiving about one thousand pounds Irish on my account, in the course of twelve months. But I can at any time give security on the vast estates and other property of Joseph Alston, Esq., of South Carolina, who is absolutely exempt from all manner of incumbrance, and is the son-in-law of Colonel Burr."

Mrs. Blennerhassett, plucky and practical, had been left in charge of the Island, and the operations in progress there. She was equal to any ordinary emergency, but up to the Court House, events were occurring that occasioned her no little uneasiness. To those within sight and sound of preparation, the expedition had begun to assume a serious aspect, which Burr's mysterious movements and Blennerhassett's somewhat noisy complicity, no doubt, tended to exaggerate. The latter, in soliciting recruits, had partially revealed the objects of the enterprise, and had secretly admitted the authorship of the "Querist Letters." Reports flew thick and fast, and the newspapers were busy heaping fuel upon the flames. It was asserted that the Western troops were to be collected at the rapids of the Ohio about the middle of October, and from thence proceed rapidly in light boats to New Orleans, being joined on the way by the

forces raised in Tennessee and other quarters. The revolt of the slaves along the river, and the seizure of the bank at New Orleans were declared to be a part of the program. It was also said that a British squadron from the West Indies was to act in conjunction with the land forces, and with Burr at the head, sail from New Orleans to Vera Cruz. Two days after General Jackson had issued his proclamation to the Tennessee militia, the citizens of Wood County held a mass meeting at the Court House in disapproval of the "apparently hostile movements and designs," passed resolutions affirming their attachment to the President, and ordered that a body of militia be raised for emergencies.

Mrs. Blennerhassett received word that two volunteer companies were being mustered at "the point," under Colonel Hugh Phelps, and that a raid was to be made upon the Island to burn the mansion, and seize the kiln-dried corn. Peter Taylor, the gardener, was hastily dispatched to Lexington to notify her husband of their danger, and warn Colonel Burr, whose life was threatened, not to return.

Taylor proceeded by way of Chillicothe to Cincinnati; stopped with John Smith, to whom he related the happenings up the river, and from whom he received a letter for Blennerhassett, inclosing another

for Burr, in which he took Burr to task regarding the reports in circulation, and to which he later received the reply: "If there exists any design to separate the Western from the Eastern States, I am totally ignorant of it. I never harbored or expressed any such intention to any one; nor did any person ever intimate such a design to me."

Upon Taylor's arrival at Lexington, the little coterie of conspirators dispersed in various directions: Dupiestre proceeded to Washington on a mission connected with the enterprise—now known to be a last endeavor to throw Yrujo, the Spanish Minister, off the scent; the Alstons continued their journey to the "Oaks," their home in South Carolina; Burr, for the time being, remained with his worthies in Kentucky, while Blennerhassett, with Peter Taylor, returned to his island on the Ohio. As he neared the end of his journey, he found little abatement in the excitement. Rumors reached him that an attempt would be made on his person upon his arrival, and he called on Dr. Bennett, of Mason County, to learn further particulars, and solicit aid against the unwarrantable attack of his Wood County neighbors. He assured Dr. Bennett that he and Colonel Burr harbored no designs adverse to the United States; that their enterprise was of a speculative nature, and urged the doctor to hasten any who

might wish to emigrate, to join him, equipped with rifles and blankets, at the Island. On reaching home Nov. 3rd, he learned that Colonel Phelps had sent Mrs. Blennerhassett a message, assuring her that she should be protected from violence during the absence of her husband. Nevertheless, Blennerhassett made ready some fire-arms he always kept by him, but no attack was made. Somewhat reassured, he dispatched a letter to Colonel Phelps acknowledging his obligations for his kindness; expressing his satisfaction in his being placed in command of the militia, and requesting him to call at the Island, as he desired an interview.

Colonel Phelps came down a few days later, when Blennerhassett again thanked him for the friendly interest manifested in behalf of his family. He then spoke of his connection with Aaron Burr in a land purchase, and assured him that the rumors accusing Burr and his friends of engaging in anything against the laws of the United States was entirely without foundation. He said that the proximity of their purchase to that section where an engagement was expected between General Wilkinson and the Spaniards would likely engage Colonel Burr and his friends in the earliest adventures of the war. He stated that General Jackson, who was expected to join the settlement with many associates, was already prepared to

march with ten or fifteen hundred militia as soon as he considered himself authorized by the orders or wishes of the government.

On account of his family and the unsettled condition of his affairs, Colonel Phelps declined to engage in the enterprise, but said that he would recommend it to the young men of Wood County, many of whom, no doubt, would be glad to join.

It was not long after this meeting that Burr once more put in appearance at the Island. From here he repaired to Marietta and the scene of preparation on the Muskingum. But his stay was brief. He was in the enemy's country; besides, he had other boats building, and weightier matters demanded his attention elsewhere. So, having completed his arrangements, he again embarked down the Ohio, leaving Blennerhassett in charge of affairs, now well on the way, in this locality. When all things were ready, he was to follow with the men, provisions, and boats to the place of general rendezvous, at the mouth of the Gumberland. Meanwhile, let us glance at what was transpiring down in Louisiana.

CHAPTER XI

PATRIOT OR TRAITOR

As the shadows were lengthening about the frontier post of Natchitoches, on October 8th, 1806, a travel-worn stranger approached the headquarters of General Wilkinson, and made inquiry for Colonel Cushing. Only Wilkinson and Cushing were present, and upon the latter making himself known, the stranger handed him a note of introduction from General Dayton. He said he was Samuel Swartwout, mentioned in the letter; whereupon Cushing presented him to Wilkinson, and invited him to take a seat with them at the table. He accepted the invitation, saying that he and Peter V. Ogden, a nephew of General Dayton, while on their way to New Orleans, had learned at Fort Adams that the troops were assembling at Natchitoches to march against the Spaniards; that Ogden had gone on to New Orleans, and that he desired to enlist as a volunteer.

During the conversation that followed, Cushing was called out, and, in his absence, Swartwout hastened to place a packet in the hand of Wilkinson, and

then sauntered out for a stroll about the camp. It was a novel sight that met his eye: The old French trading-post, with its rude stockade and cordon of outlying tents, was swarming with rough and ready Westerners, mustered here on the border because of the threatening attitude of the Spaniards on the Sabine. General Simon de Herrera, Governor of Mont el Rey, who was said to have arrived at Nacogdoches with six companies of mounted militia, on August 17th, crossed the Sabine with a considerable force, and advanced as far as Bayou Pierre.

A number of outrages, considered sufficient provocation for redress by most, had been previously committed: Three Americans had been arrested, and illegally detained at Nacogdoches. Thomas Freeman with an exploring party, while ascending the Red River on a scientific expedition, had been assailed and driven back. An American flag displayed by the Caddoe Indians, as an evidence of their allegiance to the new masters of the country, had been cut down. So inflamed were the Americans by these depredations, that when General Herrera made ready to establish a garrison at Bayou Pierre, only a word was needed to set an army in motion.

Upon Claiborne, Governor of Orleans Territory, receiving notice of this new encroachment, he sought

an interview with Cowles Meade, Governor of Mississippi Territory, and having received from him the promise of assistance in case of necessity, hastened on to Natchitoches. On arriving, he found the garrison reinforced by Colonel Thomas Cushing and three companies of regulars, who had been sent from St. Louis, on May 8th, by General Wilkinson. They carried with them two four-pounders and a five-inch howitzer—a welcome addition to the little stockade, with its six guns and two hundred fighting men. Their united force was soon augmented by several companies of militia from different parts of the settled section of that region—untrained but eager for an encounter with the insolent intruders.

Colonel Cushing at once dispatched a message to Herrera demanding the withdrawal of his troops to the west side of the river Sabine and warning him that if he failed to comply with his demand, he would consider him an invader of the Territory, and would act accordingly. To this Herrera replied with equal warmth, that he had crossed the Sabine with a detachment of the King's troops; that he was acting under the orders of the Captain General, and that if Cushing made any infringement, he alone would be responsible.

On September 22d, Wilkinson made his long expected appearance upon the scene, and two days later

he sent a lengthy letter to Antonio Cordero, the ranking officer at Nacogdoches, located about sixty miles west of the Sabine, and he, in turn, transmitted it to his superior, General Nemesio Salcedo. Meantime, the militia continued to arrive, and word was sent that a force of regulars was making ready to march from New Orleans. But an unforeseen event had rendered their coming and Wilkinson's voluminous correspondence all unnecessary. But let us return to his headquarters.

When the General had found himself alone after Swartwout's departure, he opened up the parcel he had received. It contained three letters: One was an ordinary note of introduction from Colonel Burr; but the other two were in cipher. The first of these was the famous communication of Burr before setting out westward. It was dated July 29th, and barring alterations by Wilkinson, read as follows:

"Yours, postmarked 13th May, is received. At length I have obtained funds, and have actually commenced the enterprise. The eastern detachments from different points, and under different pretenses, will rendezvous on the Ohio, 1st of November. Everything internal and external favors our views. Naval protection of England is secured. Truxton is going to Jamaica to arrange with the admiral on that sta-

tion; it will meet *us on* the Mississippi.—England.—Navy of the United States are ready to join, and final orders are given to my friends and followers. It will be a host of choice spirits. Wilkinson shall be second to Burr only; and Wilkinson shall dictate the rank and promotion of his officers. Burr will proceed westward, 1st of August, never to return. With him go his daughter *and grandson*. The husband will follow in October with a corps of worthies. Send, forthwith, an intelligent and confidential friend with whom Burr may confer. He shall return immediately with further interesting details; this is essential to harmony and concert of movement. Send a list of all persons known to Wilkinson west of the mountains who could be *useful*, with a note delineating their character. By your messenger send me four or five commissions of your officers, which you can borrow under any pretense you please. They shall be retained faithfully. Already are orders given to the contractor to forward six months' provision to points Wilkinson may name; this shall not be used until the last moment, and then under proper injunctions. *Our* project, *my dear* friend, is brought to a point so long desired. Burr guarantees the result with his life and honor, with the lives and honor, and the fortunes of hundreds of the best blood of our country.

"Burr's plan of operation is to move down rapidly from the Falls on the 15th of November, with the first five hundred or one thousand men, in the light boats now constructing for that purpose, to be at Natchez between the fifth and fifteenth of December; there to meet you; there to determine whether it will be expedient, in the first instance, to seize on, or pass by Baton Rouge. On receipt of this, send Burr an answer. Draw on Burr for all expenses, etc. The people of the country to which we are going are prepared to receive us; their agents, now with Burr, say if we will protect their religion, and will not subject them to a foreign power, that, in three weeks, all will be settled. The gods invite *us* to glory and fortune; it remains to be seen whether we deserve the boon. The bearer of this goes express to you; he will hand a formal letter of introduction to you from Burr. He is a man of inviolable honor and perfect discretion; formed to execute rather than project; capable of relating facts with fidelity, and incapable of relating them otherwise. He is thoroughly informed of the plans and intentions of *Burr*, and will disclose to you as far as you inquire, and no further. He has imbibed a reverence for your character, and may be embarrassed in your presence. Put him at ease, and he will satisfy you."

The remaining letter was from Dayton, and ran thus:

"Dear Sir:—It is well ascertained that you are to be displaced in next session. Jefferson will affect to yield reluctantly to the public sentiment, but yield he will. Prepare yourself, therefore, for it. You know the rest. You are not a man to despair, or even despond, especially when such prospects offer in another quarter. Are you ready? Wealth and glory, Louisiana and Mexico! I shall have time to receive a letter from you before I set out for Ohio. OHIO! Address one to me here, and another in Cincinnati. Receive and treat my nephew affectionately as you would receive your friend.
Dayton."

The night was far spent when Wilkinson's transcription of the letters had sufficiently progressed to give him a fair idea of their contents. Just what passed through his mind as he sat there in the silence of the camp will never be known; but subsequent events go to prove that his thoughts chiefly concerned the means which would enable him to extricate himself from the piteous predicament that confronted him. He realized that this plot, unlike the others which had gone before, was actually materializing; that he was hopelessly entangled in its meshes, and that he was expected to carry out the part he had led Burr to

believe he would perform. It was admitted that he held the key to the situation; that a blow from him would precipitate the war with Spain, that would give the daring leader and his legionaries their coveted opportunity to advance upon Mexico. True, Burr knew him to be both wily and vacillating; and that he feared he would weaken at the critical moment is evidenced by the bracing letter of General Dayton. But there were other contingencies he had not taken into the account. He had no means of knowing that Wilkinson, much to that worthy's discomfiture, was no longer the arbiter of peace and war; that even all cause for hostility was taken away. On September 27th, General Herrera, with his Spanish troopers, without notice, without orders, had evacuated Bayou Pierre, and on the 30th of the month, had quietly retired beyond the Sabine, leaving not a single straggler on the disputed territory behind.

His decampment had completely upset Wilkinson's plans, whose heart as well as Burr's was set on the plunder of Mexico. He was not only discomfited, but dismayed at the turn affairs had taken. Preparations for the expedition were already on the way, up the Ohio and Cumberland. The press was persistent in coupling his name with Burr's. He was equally discredited by the public, and even Jefferson had ven-

tured to express doubts of his soundness. But the ill wind that swept away his hopes, and stranded others, had left an opportunity that he might yet make good. There was a chance remaining to prove his loyalty; a possibility of extricating himself from the difficulty that so sorely beset him. In the prevailing doubt and uncertainty as to the danger that threatened the peace and security of the Union, might he not be able to give shape and direction to public sentiment. He was not the man to slight a chance with which fortune favored him. He would throw himself into the breach, and proclaim himself to be the saviour of his country. He knew it would defeat the fondest expectations of his coadjutors; knew it would charge the West with disloyalty; knew it would brand some of his oldest and most prominent friends as traitors. But the die was cast. There was no other way to retrieve his fair fame; perchance save his neck from the gallows. It would require a supreme effort, but it also promised substantial reward. Besides reinstating himself in public favor, might he not, with his diplomacy, be able to convince the Spaniard that he had acted with an eye entirely single to his service. But this may have been an afterthought. He had ample time from the day Herrera took up his march till the arrival of Burr's messenger for planning

his *coup de main*; and may have only waited for his expected arrival to announce his program. It was a trying task, and it is possible that at times he even wavered, as he afterwards admitted starting a letter to Burr; that the carrier was followed, and the message intercepted. But from the night he laboriously spelled out Burr's cipher, he strenuously adhered to the course he then determined upon.

The next morning he approached the quarters of Colonel Cushing, and calling him aside, informed him that he had a serious matter to communicate; that what he should divulge was to be held in strict confidence for the present, but that he should bear it in mind so that he would be able to make a succinct statement of it in the future. He then asked Cushing if he knew anything of the enterprise on foot in the Western States.

Cushing replied that he had heard nothing on the subject, and asked him to what enterprise he alluded.

"A great number of individuals, possessing wealth, popularity, and talents, my friend," said the General, "are, at this moment, associated for purposes inimical to the government of the United States. Colonel Burr is at their head, and the young gentleman who delivered you the letter last evening, is one of his emissaries. The story of serving as a volunteer is only

a mask. He has brought me a letter from Colonel Burr, which, being in cipher, I have not yet been fully able to make out; but I have discovered that his object is treasonable, and that it is my duty to oppose him by every means in my power. He assures me that he has funds; says the navy is with him; offers to make me second in command, and to give the officers of the army anything I may ask for them; and he requests me to send a confidential friend to confer with him at Nashville, in Tennessee. In fact, he seems to calculate on me and the army as ready to join him."

Cushing asked him if he had received any information or instruction relating to the matter from the government.

He said he had not, and must, therefore, adopt such measures as, in his judgment, were calculated to defend the country. He then outlined his plans: which were to march at once to the Sabine; make terms with the Spanish commander; dispatch Cushing to New Orleans to secure the French artillery, and put the post in defense, himself to follow at the earliest possible moment with every man that could be spared from Natchitoches. He added that he would inform the President and solicit instructions, but until his pleasure could be known, he would pursue the course he had adopted as the only means in his power to save the country.

At the expiration of ten days, Swartwout, unsuspecting Wilkinson's treachery, proceeded on his way down the river. Wilkinson afterward testified that during his stay he revealed to him Burr's plan of levying an armed force of seven thousand men for carrying an expedition against the Mexican provinces. That they were to equip themselves at New Orleans; embark about the first of February for Vera Cruz, and march from that port to Mexico. That to his inquiry, Swartwout said this territory would be revolutionized, where the people were ready to join them, and there would be some seizing he supposed at New Orleans. "I observed," said Wilkinson, "that there were several millions of dollars in the bank at this place." "To which he replied, 'We know it full well,' and on remarking that they certainly did not mean to violate private property, he said 'they merely meant to borrow, and would return it.'"

Two days after he had departed, Wilkinson wrote a letter to President Jefferson, stating that he had received information through various channels that a powerful association, extending from New York through the Western States and Territories, had been formed with the design to embark eight or ten thousand men, about February 1st, and in conjunction with a naval armament carry an expedition against

Vera Cruz. That agents from Mexico, who were in Philadelphia in the beginning of August, had given assurance that the arrival of the expedition would be the signal for a general insurrection; that all opposition would be silenced in three or four weeks; that the first general rendezvous was to be held near the Falls of the Ohio about the 20th of the month following; from whence they were to proceed in light boats, being joined by their auxiliaries on their way to New Orleans. Then in his child-like simplicity, he unblushingly continues: "It is unknown under what authority this enterprise has been projected; from whence the means of its support are derived, or what may be the intentions of its leaders in relation to the Territory of Orleans; but it is believed that the maritime co-operation will depend on a British squadron from the West Indies, under the ostensible command of American masters."

The next day he indicted the second chapter in a more confidential tone, but unwittingly contradicted himself by saying: "I shall forbear to commit names, because it is my desire to avert a great public calamity, and not to mar a salutary design, or injure any one undeservedly." Gradually he leads up to the point he wishes to impress. "Among other allurements proposed to me, I am informed you connive at the com-

bination, and that our country will justify it; but when I examine my orders of the 6th May, I am obliged to discredit these imputations. But should this association be formed in opposition to the laws, and in defiance of government, then I have no doubt that the revolt of this territory will be made an auxiliary step to the main design of attacking Mexico, to give a new master in place of promised liberty. Could the fact be ascertained to me, I believe I should hazard my discretion, make the best compromise I could with Salcedo, in my power, and throw my little band into New Orleans, to be ready to defend that capital against usurpation and violence."

After submitting certain recommendations as to the disposition of the troops up the river, and the fortification of New Orleans, he dispatched the letters he had written by the hand of Lieutenant Thomas A. Smith. On Oct. 21st, this officer departed for Washington under pretense of resigning his commission and quitting the service; but who in reality was furnished by Wilkinson with five hundred dollars for the journey, with a request to Jefferson to continue him on the rolls, show him some mark of approbation, and send him back to his general.

These matters attended to, he at last set out for the Sabine with colors flying, and out-skirmishers in

the advance to avoid an attack; although he well knew that not a single Spaniard would be encountered before reaching that river. They halted on its banks Oct. 29th, and the same day Wilkinson sent off Walter Burling, *ci-devant* planter, who for reasons best known to himself, he had made an aide-de-camp, with a proposition to Cordero that, "without yielding a pretension, ceding a right, or interfering with the discussions which belong to our superiors; to restore the 'statu quo' at the delivery of the province of Louisiana to the United States, by the withdrawing of our troops from the points they at present occupy, to the posts of Nacogdoches and Natchitoches respectively." It was also stipulated that so long as the troops of Spain were restrained from passing the Sabine, that those under the command of Wilkinson should not be allowed to cross the Arroyo Hondo. Herrera, without waiting for Cordero's decision, on Nov. 5th, sent Don Francisco Viana, his second in command across the river to make terms with Wilkinson on the basis proposed, and at break of day on the morrow, they broke camp as agreed upon. The same day the Americans, led by Colonel Cushing, set out on their return march to Natchitoches. What would have been their chagrin had they known the full intent of Wilkinson's order read by Burling, as they stood

waiting in line. How would they have received his fullsome flattery had they known his announcement declaring that Herrera had agreed to withdraw his forces to Nacogdoches, and prohibit their crossing the Sabine pending the negotiations of the United States with Spain, was only half the truth. Instead of establishing the pretensions of their government to the territory east of the Sabine, as they believed, they had been duped by Wilkinson into accepting what was afterwards to be known as the Neutral Ground Treaty.

CHAPTER XII

A REIGN OF TERROR

HAVING succeeded in establishing a truce with the Spaniards, Wilkinson now felt himself at liberty to deal with the situation that confronted him with a freer hand. He first sent Major Porter forward to repair Forts Charles and Henry at New Orleans, with orders to make ready shot and shell, grape and canister, and to mount every cannon and field-piece available. Then leaving Cushing to follow, he hastened on to Natchez; where he went, as he said, to require a body of militia of the Governor of the Territory, to sound the public mind, to pick up such information as he could of the doings up stream, and above all to secure a confidential messenger to carry a dispatch to the President.

On the way, he paused long enough at Natchitoches to address a letter to Colonel Freeman, Commandant at New Orleans, notifying him that Major Porter had been sent to his aid, with instructions to govern him in repairing the defenses of the city, and giving him orders to purchase ten thousand pickets for palisades

and fraisings, and plank and scantling without stint; cautioning him in the meantime to be silent as the grave. Another message, pitched in a somewhat higher key, was sent back to Cushing: "By letters found here, I perceive the plot thickens; yet all but those concerned sleep profoundly. My God! What a situation has our country reached; let us save it, if we can!" Then calling his attention to the arms and ammunition, and giving his opinion that there would be an insurrection of blacks as well as whites, he closed, urging Cushing, "Hurry, hurry after me! And, if necessary, let us be buried together in the ruins of the place we shall defend."

From Natchez, on Nov. 11th, he forwarded an alarming letter to Governor Claiborne, assuring him that he was surrounded by dangers of which he did not dream; that the American government was seriously menaced, and that the storm would probably burst at New Orleans, where he expected to meet it in triumph or perish in the attempt. He asserted that he should have a thousand troops in the city in three weeks, and that he expected assistance by sea; but their only safety lay in concealing their intentions, and that, unfortunately, Claiborne was spied upon on every hand.

The next day, Isaac Griggs took up his solitary journey toward Washington, bearing another lengthy

communication from the General to the President. "Many circumstances have intervened since my last," he began, "confirmatory of the information previously received, and demonstrative of a deep, dark, and wicked conspiracy. My doubts have ceased, and it is my opinion that naught but an immediate peace in Europe can prevent an explosion which may desolate these settlements, inflict a deep wound on our republican policies, involve us in a foreign conflict, and shake the government to its very foundation. He averred that the real intention of the conspiracy was, "To seize on New Orleans, revolutionize the Territory, and carry an expedition against Mexico, by the way of Vera Cruz," and that a force of seven thousand men was expected to descend from the Ohio. After dwelling on his own patriotism, his fear of assassination, and his extremely critical situation, he requested Jefferson to assist him with a naval armament of two thousand to guard the mouth of the Mississippi. He declared that it would be absolutely necessary to place New Orleans under martial law, and that to insure the triumph of the government, he was obliged to resort to artifice: "I must hold out false colors, conceal my designs, and cheat my adversaries into a state of security, that when I do strike, it may be with more force and effect."

Several days were occupied with his business at Natchez, and it was not until the twenty-fifth of November that he reached the "Crescent City." His coming was the signal for increased activity on the part of those in charge of the repairs under way. Men were hurried forward on the defenses; stockades were put in order; pickets planted, and cannon mounted. The French Artillery remaining in the Territory was purchased. Fort Adams, at the mouth of Red River, had been dismantled, and its ordinance and troops, together with the garrison at Fort Stephens, all hurried on to New Orleans.

The public, curious and apprehensive, looked on as these formidable preparations proceeded, uncertain as to their meaning, and still more disquieted by the mysterious air assumed by the man in charge. So profound were the secrets held in his keeping, that he apparently hesitated to reveal them to the Governor himself. When, at last, he ventured to unburden his mind, Claiborne, always suspicious, readily caught the alarm, and white-winged messages flew thick and fast. His fright was not altogether without excuse, as Wilkinson's well-timed exposures were simultaneously reinforced by the arrival of confidential letters from Andrew Jackson of Tennessee and Cowles Meade of Mississippi, who with others up-river were beginning

to get their eyes open. In his characteristic way, Jackson bid the Governor beware of the month of December; to make good his defenses, and to keep a wary eye on the "General," and Meade hesitated not to question the patriotism of Wilkinson in thus massing the entire force of the country at New Orleans. Governor Claiborne, caught between the devil and the deep sea; with the city menaced by foes without, and beset with conspiracy within, lost no time in notifying Captain Shaw, of the United States navy to have his armament—consisting of four gun-boats and two bomb-ketches—ready for immediate service.

While the populace trembled in suspense, word was in some way given out of the danger that threatened the city, and the cry was at once taken up from every quarter that Burr and his minions, two thousand strong were descending upon New Orleans. The wildest alarm prevailed, and the heated imagination of the inhabitants conjured up harrowing scenes of invasion and revolt. The Governor, in his turn, was not less startled by Wilkinson demanding that martial law be proclaimed over the city, its ports and precincts; and that unless he was authorized to repress the seditious, arrest the disaffected, and call all the resources of the place into action, everything would be

lost; and as he expressed it, "the Goddess of Liberty will take her flight from this globe forever."

The following day, he renewed his application, giving it as his belief that "Burr and his banditti" would soon be at hand. Claiborne still refused to accede to his request, but consented to call a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. Accordingly, that body met December 9th, at the Government House; Paul Lanusse acting as Chairman, and Richard Relf, as Secretary. The meeting was addressed by both Claiborne and Wilkinson. The Governor spoke first, explaining why they had been convened, and asking that money be donated and sailors furnished to man the little fleet in the harbor. Wilkinson, who had coveted such an opportunity, and believing it time to make an advance, gallantly rose to the greatness of the occasion. The part he took is best given in his report to the President: "I explained the causes which had produced the assembly of the troops at this place, and the preparations which were making to fortify the town; painted to them in glowing colors the impending dangers which menaced the city and Territory, and threatened the sheet anchor of all our hopes. I explained the plans I contemplated for the safety of the country, and in default of my means to accomplish the end, I appealed to their fears, their hopes, their patriotism, and their interests for

prompt co-operation in manning the armed flotilla destined to ascend the river."

Before adjourning, it was unanimously agreed that the best method to be pursued was for the Governor to lay an embargo on the shipping in port. Claiborne acting on their recommendation, forthwith issued orders that no vessel should leave New Orleans without consent of himself or Wilkinson. The merchants also came forward with four thousand, five hundred dollars to purchase clothing and other supplies for the sailors who should enter the service of the government. Wilkinson insisted that these should be enlisted for six months. To this the merchants objected, arguing, not unreasonably, that such a course was not only unnecessary, but that it would paralyze their business, perhaps involve them in ruin. When the sailors themselves refused to enlist for so long a period, the irate General called upon Claiborne, and endeavored to frighten him into impressing the seaman; but the Governor shrank from taking such an unwarranted action. He said he had already authorized an embargo, an act which could alone be exercised legally by the general government, and that he knew of no precedent for the arbitrary measure proposed, in any state or territory of the Union. It was all to no purpose that Wilkinson stormed and entreated; "Claiborne con-

tinued to refuse to order the impressment of sailors, the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, the declaration of martial law, and the arrest of suspected persons."

Wilkinson, now satisfied that Claiborne could not be driven into joining him in his high-handed measures, and not being troubled with the Governor's scruples, determined to act upon his own responsibility. Lieutenant Swan was sent away with a dispatch to the admiral in command of the British naval forces at Jamaica, informing him of Burr's plot, and the report that aid was promised or expected from a British naval armament, and warning him and all other British officers against any interference or co-operation under pain of incurring the serious displeasure of the United States.

His first blow fell at New Orleans on Sunday, Dec. 14th, when Dr. Eric Bollman, a German, noted for the attempted liberation of General Lafayette from his prison at Olmutz, and who had been sent West with dispatches by Burr was summarily ordered under arrest. A writ of habeas corpus was sued for in his behalf; but before it could be issued, he was put on board a vessel, and shipped off to Charleston, under charge of Lieutenant Wilson.

Ogden and Swartwout next found themselves in his toils, being seized at Fort Adams, and brought to

New Orleans on a United States bomb-ketch. Following their restraint, a notice was served by the General, setting forth that all accomplices against whom proof could be produced would be arrested without regard to class or station. A proclamation was also issued by the Governor, warning all citizens to hold aloof from the unlawful association. The excitement was intense. It is said so great was the alarm and fear for personal safety, that when writs of habeas corpus were granted by Judge Workman in favor of Ogden and Swartwout, no boat could be procured to take the officer on board the ketch, lying in the middle of the river, and that a boat only could be secured the next day by the tempting offer of a large sum of money.

On board the ketch, Captain Shaw, on whom the writ was served, stated that Swartwout, whom Wilkinson had lost no time in sending off to Baltimore, was no longer in his keeping; but that Ogden was still held, who was produced, and discharged without further formality by Judge Workman. No sooner did he find himself at liberty, than he was again arrested, together with a friend by the name of Alexander. Once more writs were issued in due form, but Wilkinson instead of producing the prisoners sent a message to the Judge, asking him to accept such return as applicable "to the two traitors who were subjects of the writs." Where-

upon Edward Livingston, having obtained a rule on Wilkinson to make a further and more explicit return, and Wilkinson refusing to comply, moved for an attachment against him. No less than three times did Judge Workman apply to the Governor to enforce the requirements of the Court; but, although supported by Hall and Mathews, Judges of the Superior Court, the only response he secured was a passive protest, advising Wilkinson to submit to the civil authorities. This the General peremptorily refused to do, and Workman, indignant that the Court and its officers should be subject to the insults of a man they could neither punish nor resist, dismissed the Court, and resigned his office. Wilkinson thus found himself practically in possession of the field as supreme dictator. He had overridden the civil authorities; he was General-in-chief of the army; he had inaugurated a reign of terror, unprecedented in this free country; henceforth, he determined that his word should be recognized as law.

A few days after Judge Workman's resignation, General John Adair, of Kentucky, rode into the city, having come from Tennessee, by way of the Choctaw country. While at dinner, the boarding-house where he lodged was surrounded by one hundred and twenty of Wilkinson's soldiers under Colonel Kingsbury.

Adair was dragged from the table, and hurried off to headquarters, where he was confined until he could be sent away by sea to Washington. The city was in wild commotion; soldiers patrolled the streets; many citizens were seized, among whom were Editor Bradford, Colonel Kerr, who had given information regarding Alexander, and Judge Workman himself.

Meanwhile, far away to the North, events of no small importance were being enacted. About the middle of November, John Graham, former Secretary of the Territory of Orleans, made his appearance at Marietta. Soon after his arrival he met Blennerhassett, and held a lengthy interview with him in a hotel at that place. He found the affable Irishman, who was led to believe that he was an adherent of Burr's, to be very enthusiastic regarding the proposed expedition. He admitted that he was engaged with Burr, and that he had an interest in his Bastrop purchase; that he was building boats; contracting for provisions, and enlisting men for the enterprise. Young men, armed, and without families, were preferred; he did not solicit them, but took only such as were pleased to go. He mentioned the probability of a conflict with the Spaniards, and asked Graham if he had not heard of an association in New Orleans for the invasion of Mexico. He stated that he had been informed by Mr. Bradford,

Editor of the "Gazette d' Orleans" that three hundred men had already joined the expedition; and seemed much surprised when assured that no such association existed. Conceiving him to be cruelly deceived, Graham now disclosed the object of his mission; informed him that instead of being concerned in the plot, he was the authorized agent of the government, empowered to take such steps as might be necessary for its repression. That because of Burr's visit to New Orleans the previous summer, from information received by the government, and from the nature of the preparations that Blennerhassett himself was then making, he was led to believe that the object of the expedition was to attack the Spanish territories, or those of the United States. He plainly told him that any collection of armed men on the Ohio River, under present circumstances, would be considered a violation of the laws, and suppressed accordingly, and finally endeavored to dissuade him from further participation in the enterprise, but all without avail.

From Marietta, Graham extended his investigations to the vicinity of Wood County Court House, where he interviewed Hugh Phelps, and John and Alexander Henderson at "Beech Park," up the Kanawha. He had been sent by Jefferson to the place of preparation not only, "to spy out and investigate the plot, hostile

to the national interest," but also, "to enter into conference with the civil and military authorities in the West, and with their aid to discover the designs of the supposed conspirators, and to bring the offenders to punishment when he should have fully ascertained their intentions." So, armed with the information secured, he set out for Chillicothe, at that time the capital of Ohio. Upon his representation, Governor Tiffin submitted the matter to the Legislature, then in session. And on December 6th, that body passed a bill, "To prevent certain acts hostile to the peace and tranquility of the United States within the jurisdiction of the State of Ohio."

The Governor immediately dispatched orders to Judge Meigs, at Marietta, to collect proof against the parties concerned; and for Captain Timothy Buell to marshal the Washington County forces, and intercept the flotilla. At the same time, he directed Generals Gano and Findlay, at Cincinnati, to call out the Hamilton County troops, and fortify the banks of the Ohio with artillery. From Ohio, Graham made his way to Frankfort, Kentucky, and on Dec. 23rd, that state, like her sister commonwealth, passed an act ordering her troops under arms. The same day saw Graham on his way to Nashville, Tennessee, where he laid his business before Governor Sevier, who without delay

set in motion the military of that state. Cowles Meade, Acting-Governor of Mississippi Territory, on Dec. 25th, also issued a call for four regiments of militia, and the next day wrote Governor Claiborne regarding their need of arms and ammunition. Up the Ohio, Colonel Phelps and his volunteers had already been ordered into service by Governor Cabell, of Virginia; while Wilkinson with his army and flotilla had long been waiting at New Orleans. Nor were the Spaniards less concerned than the Americans. Believing Baton Rouge to be seriously threatened, Governor Folch at the head of three or four hundred men marched from Pensacola to its defense; while in the territories to the Southwest, whither the alarm had spread, preparations were making to repel the expected invasion.

So it came to pass that while the Christmas bells of the East pealed merrily the message, "Peace on earth, good will toward men," throughout the West resounded the call, "To arms," and the stern alarm of war. From Pittsburg, at the source of the Ohio, to the far-away city of Mexico, the entire border was filled with turmoil, apprehension, and uncertainty, while its gloomy forests echoed to the ominous tread of armed men.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CRISIS

THE gathering storm hung dark and lowering about the Island of Blennerhassett. Alarming reports were in the air; while from either shore its Master was menaced by the decisive action of the constituted authorities, and the more hostile attitude of the lusty militiamen. Blennerhassett seemed to have a premonition of his impending misfortunes, and fearing the outcome, hesitated to embark on the uncertain tide that was destined to bear him far from his moorings, and, in the end, leave him stranded on unfriendly shores. In an evil hour, he had joined his fortunes with Aaron Burr, but unlike his dauntless leader, he was by nature and manner of life wholly unfitted for the undertaking that confronted him. The critical moment at hand, his friends falling away, his neighbors consorting with his enemies, he would have drawn back, but instead, as if the Fates had conspired against him, was driven relentlessly onward. Beset with gloomy forebodings, he went on with his preparations, alone sustained by the courageous words and intrepid

example of Lady Blennerhassett, whose high spirit rose with the signs of approaching danger.

The first recruits to arrive at the Island made their landing on Saturday, Dec. 6th. The little company—which had been delayed by waiting for men and supplies—numbered about thirty, collected at Beaver, Pennsylvania, and four boats bearing provisions, under command of Comfort Tyler, of New York, acting purveyor of the expedition. Their coming was orderly, but naturally attended with more or less excitement on the part of the Master and Mistress of the Isle. Tyler found Blennerhassett very much discouraged, and inclined to give up the whole affair; but reassured by the enthusiasm of the late arrivals, and spurred on by the persuasive eloquence of his wife, he yielded to the inevitable, despite the dictates of his own better judgment.

Sunday was spent on shore. Charles Fenton Mercer, on his way East, was also entertained that day by the Blennerhassetts. He had stopped the evening before with a view of purchasing the Island, and had been received with the accustomed hospitality of the mansion. Blennerhassett made him an offer of the property for fifty thousand dollars, which he assured him was ten thousand less than it had cost. But Mercer declined to invest that amount, and the conversation

turned upon the proposed removal to Washita. The enterprise was freely discussed, and their visitor invited to join the society, which, it was asserted, promised to be the most select and agreeable. On Sunday afternoon, Mr. Mercer, with many pleasing remembrances of his visit, resumed his journey, Blennerhassett accompanying him as far as Marietta.

On the following Tuesday, while Wilkinson was revealing his secrets to the Chamber of Commerce at New Orleans, the boats that were to have been delivered that day by Colonel Barker to Blennerhassett at Marietta, were seized on the Muskingum by General Buel's militia, together with one hundred barrels of pork, that had been stowed in Mr. Green's cellar at Marietta.

Blennerhassett had sent James Dean, that morning, to Colonel Barker with a request to forward all the boats that were ready by Captain Elliot, and in company with Tyler, Smith, and some young men from Belpre, he, sometime later, set out to assist in bringing them down from Marietta. On the way, they met Woodbridge, who, on seeing the militia starting to take the boats, had hurried down to inform them of what had taken place. After some consultation, he prevailed upon Blennerhassett to go back to the Island, while he returned to Marietta. The young men were

not so easily dissuaded; thirsting for adventure, they determined to thwart the authorities, and bring away the boats at night. They waited about a friendly fireside at Belpre until darkness closed in the Valley, and then set out upon their venture. Proceeding up the Ohio, they came in time to the Muskingum. Cautiously eluding the vigilance of the guard, and shielded by the overhanging branches, they were in the act of unfastening the boats, when a slight sound caught the ear of a sentinel, who gave the alarm, and a hand to hand encounter ensued, the boats meanwhile drifting toward mid-stream while their occupants heroically strove for the mastery. For awhile the contest seemed doubtful, but finally all save one were retaken, and with it the young adventurers escaped in safety to the Island.

The militia were thereafter a prey to apprehension and uncertainty. Much rude horse-play was indulged in at their expense, and many practical jokes were played upon the guards by the wags of the company, to the annoyance of the inhabitants and the more serious discomfiture of their fellows. An empty tar-barrel placed upon an old boat or raft of logs would be set on fire and turned afloat. Believing an enemy to be approaching, it would be hailed by the guard, and no response being received, it would be fired upon with

the cannon they had stationed on shore. Another diversion was to bury half a keg of powder; and at midnight, when all save the guards were sleeping soundly, apply a slow match, when, suddenly, the earth would heave as in the throes of a mighty convulsion, and a report would follow that carried terror and consternation to those who slumbered and slept, for miles around.

Wednesday, December 10th, was a dismal day for the Islanders. The weather was extremely cold; snow was on the ground, and ice running in the river—an ill time to contemplate a voyage of many hundred miles. But all realized the crisis was at hand—that every hour's delay imperiled, by so much, the success of the expedition, already crippled by the loss of boats and provisions. During the day, information was received that Colonel Phelps and his forces were making arrangements to descend upon the Island on the morrow, to arrest its Master, and take possession of the boats and supplies that lay in waiting.

Blennerhassett was thoroughly alarmed, and the Island all excitement and confusion. A hasty conference was held, and an immediate flight determined upon. Action succeeded commotion, and the babel soon settled in a scene of busy preparation. Night was coming on, and moving lights gleamed from the

many windows of the mansion. Dark figures could be seen running hither and thither. Lighted lanterns fitted among the trees, along the walks, and toward the river. Here a watch-fire was built, and an armed guard stationed. Runners were sent out, and a constant communication kept up from shore to shore. Unknown persons were not allowed to cross without the signal. Those hailing would be asked, "What boat?" and if the answer, "I's boat," were given they would be immediately ferried over.

As it was growing dusk, Simon Poole arrived on the Ohio side, opposite the Island, having come by the authority of the Governor of that State to apprehend Blennerhassett. He watched and waited incognito on the Ohio shore, but did not attempt to pass the water's edge, the utmost limit of his jurisdiction; contenting himself by watching the movements on the other shore, the sentinels keeping vigil about the fire, and the passing and repassing of boats across the river. Among those who arrived was Pearly Howe, with forty boat-poles, which he had been employed to make by Blennerhassett, who sent over his flat to receive them. In the boat were two young men armed with rifles; one of them laid aside his weapon, and stowed away the poles, while the other kept guard with his gun across his knees. Allen Wood, a neigh-

bor of Howe's, asked to be taken over in the flat, but was refused.

Dudley Woodbridge crossed to the Island just at nightfall. He observed a number of men about the boats, but proceeded directly to the mansion. In the Hall, some fifteen or twenty more were gathered about the great fire-place, and all was hubbub and confusion. He inquired at once for Blennerhassett, and when he made his appearance, informed him that he had brought money and papers to adjust their partnership concerns. Blennerhassett led the way upstairs, and for two hours they were closeted in settling their Marietta business, dating from April 24th, 1802. Woodbridge then started home, but on reaching the landing met Maurice Belknap, who had also come over from Ohio on business with Blennerhassett. This attended to, they accepted an invitation to remain over night, and both retired in an upper guest-chamber of the mansion. It was then nine o'clock. Still the work of embarkation went on. Men were continually passing from shore to boat and from boat to shore: One bearing a trunk; another a keg of powder; still others, boxes of brandy, or bags of provision. About the mansion, many were hurrying to and fro; some of the younger were cleaning rifles or running bullets, while the servants were busy packing

chests with Blennerhassett's clothing and personal belongings. Of these, their Mistress had the oversight; and indeed she appeared to be the ruling spirit of the occasion; gliding with sylph-like grace from hall to chamber; from parlor to kitchen; counseling her husband; directing the servants; encouraging and inspiring all with her metal and enthusiasm.

The only bundle remaining had been dispatched; the last trunk left for the landing; the final order been given; the sleeping boys kissed a tearful good-bye, when the old hall clock chimed the solemn hour of midnight, and Blennerhassett, cloaked and booted, and accompanied by his faithful wife issued from his mansion. For a moment, the light from within revealed her lithe form, his bent shoulders and troubled face, then the door closed behind them. A fitful rain had been falling on the beaten snow. The Valley was in dense darkness and benumbed with cold. Wild winds swept the long river reaches, and wailed around the corners of the pillared mansion. Arm in arm, conversing in subdued tones, they passed down the gravel walk for the last time together. The rain froze as it fell. The chill penetrated to the bone. The wind rose to a shriek. The branches swayed overhead. There was a snapping as of strings, and then a sad sighing among the old forest trees. It was like a

minor strain drifting down from Paradise. Here again was enacted the oldest tragedy in the history of the race. Was it in darkness and cold the father and mother of all their kind were compelled to take their flight? Had these, too, tasted forbidden fruit? Then, as now, the woman played the leading part. Now, as then, she bore the burden of the fall. "Onward! Onward!" She urged to the hesitating and doubting husband. "Go, before the minions of the government are upon you! Wait not for me and the children; they dare not molest the mother and her innocents. We shall follow at a more opportune season, and meet beyond the powers which pursue."

They approached the circle about the watch-fires, painted, by the leaping flames, upon night's curtain, in bizarre and uncanny outlines. Most of the men were young. Some were armed with rifles; some with shotguns, and others, with only pistols or dirks; their equipment differing little if any from that of the ordinary frontiersman and hunter of that time. Blennerhassett of all others was manifestly out of his sphere. His retort and alembic had been thrown aside; instead of Homer and his violoncello, he carried a brace of holster pistols, a pair of pocket derringers, and a dagger; besides, there were two or three fuseses belonging to him stowed away in one of the boats. A remarkable

outfit for one who could not distinguish a friend from an enemy ten paces away. Truly, between the comedy and tragedy of life there is oft but a narrow margin.

Within the circle, was General Tupper, of Marietta, who came forward and in a friendly manner endeavored to persuade Blennerhassett to surrender himself to the government, and stand his trial; at the same time assuring him that the aggrieved public would thus be satisfied, and that such a course could offer no serious inconvenience to him. Blennerhassett turned a deaf ear to his entreaties; he had gone too far to retrace his steps; his fortune was embarked in the enterprise; the die was cast, and fate like an evil demon spurred him on.

It was believed that an armed force was in waiting at Gallipolis, and a counsel was held at the foot of the pier to determine whether Blennerhassett and Tyler, who had most to fear, should proceed overland on horseback or by canoe on the river. After a brief consultation, it was decided that all risk their lot together, and an order was given to cast away. Blennerhassett bid his shivering wife an affectionate adieu, admonishing her to follow with the boys as soon as possible. A rush was made for the boats—five in number—rising stark and icy above the sullen tide. Forty men on board, their moorings were loosed, and they drifted out on

the dark waters, spectral and silent, as if piloted by Charon himself, into the night beyond.

At the dawn of the following day, there was an unusual stir in the vicinity of Wood County Court House, occasioned by two companies of militia making ready, under a proclamation of the President, to intercept the expedition rendezvoused at the Island below. It will be remembered that Lieutenant Smith, with Wilkinson's communication to Jefferson, took up his journey from Natchitoches on October 21st. Thirty-five days later he arrived at Washington; and on Nov. 27, the President issued his proclamation, declaring that sundry individuals of the United States were conspiring together for the purpose of fitting out a military expedition against the dominions of Spain; that they were equipping and arming vessels on western waters; collecting provisions, arms and military stores, and seducing honest and well-meaning citizens to engage in the enterprise. He, therefore, thought it proper to issue this proclamation, warning all faithful citizens, who had been led to participate, to withdraw. He also enjoined all officers of the law, civil and military, to be diligent in searching out, and bringing to condign punishment all persons engaged or concerned in such enterprises. And, in addition, he required all good and faithful citizens to aid in the

apprehension, and bringing to justice such offenders by giving information against them to the proper authorities.

This proclamation reached Pittsburg on December 2d; from whence it was heralded throughout the West; blasting the hopes of some; alarming the patriotism of others, and dealing the final death-blow to the ill-starred expedition of Burr and Blennerhassett. It arrived at Marietta by mail on Friday, Dec. 12th, but by some means it seems to have reached the Court House below a day or two sooner. At any rate, the Wood County militia, under Colonel Phelps were the first to take any action under its provisions. In a few hours after the embarkation, they made their appearance at the Island, but found it silent and deserted. From the servants they learned the particulars of the flight the preceding night; who also informed them that their Mistress had gone to Marietta to secure the boat, which her husband had ordered to be especially fitted up for the removal of his family to the Washita.

Leaving a part of his force in charge of the Island, Colonel Phelps with the others set out in pursuit of the fugitives, marching down the Virginia shore, then across the "big bend" of the Ohio, with a view of intercepting them at the mouth of the Great Kanawha. On arriving there, they learned that the flotilla had not

yet been sighted. With some additions to their force, a large fire was built on the shore, and a watch set, with orders to keep up the vigil during the night. The weather was raw, and their surroundings disagreeable. These were in some measure compensated for by the sociability of the Virginians, and certain black bottles were very soon in evidence; such things in those days—as every one knows—being considered indispensable marks of true hospitality. The long march, the cold night, the good cheer proved too much for the undisciplined militia, who were soon oblivious to all their surroundings. Under cover of darkness, the boats of Blennerhassett glided silently past the beacon fires on shore, and when day dawned were far beyond the reach of their discomfited pursuers.

Mounted on Robin, her favorite horse, Mrs. Blennerhassett hastened to Marietta in hope of securing the family boat, but the authorities refused to surrender it. Fertile in expedients, she was nevertheless sorely embarrassed by her situation. With no means of conveyance, and ice accumulating in the river, she almost despaired of being able to join her husband at the appointed meeting-place. But it was not until she had exhausted every effort, that on Saturday, sad and despondent, she returned to the Island. On arriving at the mansion, an awful scene met her view.

During the forenoon, a flat-boat had been driven ashore by the ice and wind about a mile below the landing. On board there were a party of sixteen young men, headed by Morgan Neville and William Robinson. Most of them were sons of wealthy and influential parents. Fresh from school, restless for adventure, they had embarked at Pittsburg, and were on their way to join the expedition, with which, somewhere in the Spanish dominions, they hoped to achieve both fame and fortune. The wind continued unfavorable until late in the afternoon. About three o'clock as they were in the act of pulling off, they were suddenly assailed by a body of armed men. Being in no situation to offer resistance, and greatly outnumbered, they at once yielded to the demands of the militia. Neville and Robinson were hurried off to the mansion, while their comrades under a strong guard remained in the boat. When their leaders reached the mansion, they found it occupied by the militia. Some were engaged in building fires on the lawn with rails and pickets torn from Blennerhassett's fences. Others broke into the wine-cellar, and the Hall became a scene of riot and drunkenness. The costly furniture was defaced by bayonets; a musket was fired overhead, tearing an unsightly hole in the beautiful ceiling, while the servants and children were terrorized.

Torn with conflicting emotions, Mrs. Blennerhassett surveyed the havoc and vandalism wrought by the disorderly crew. She bravely remonstrated against the wanton and unlicensed destruction of her home, but was told by those who pretended to command that they held the property by the order of the President for the United States, and would use it as they saw fit. When her friends endeavored to dissuade the men from this reckless and uncalled for outrage, they replied that while they were upon the Island, it belonged to them, and that everything on the farm was their property. They turned one of the best apartments of the mansion into a guard-room, in which they incarcerated the young adventurers. Smarting under their ill-fortune, they passed the time in ridiculing their rustic captors, and threatening them with legal retaliation. Their insolence finally becoming unbearable, their gaolers were the first to invoke the strong arm of the law. From the Court House were summoned Reece Wolf and Daniel Kincheloe, justices of the peace; and in the richly furnished apartment, the trial proceeded. The young men plead their own cause, and parried the retorts of their adversaries with humorous adroitness and telling effect. After an investigation of the evidence—most of which was submitted by the prisoners themselves—they were ac-

quitted of any hostile designs against the United States, and accordingly discharged.

All the while, the cellar was pouring forth its well-stored riches. Whiskey flowed in abundance, and the tipsy soldiers demanded that the servants should attend them before waiting upon their Mistress. When they refused, the kitchen was seized upon, and the negroes driven into the wash-house.

The young men were detained from Saturday night until Tuesday morning. And they afterwards solemnly averred that forty men were quartered at the mansion the first night they were on the Island; that at no time during their stay were there less than thirty, and that frequently from seventy to eighty were living in this unwarranted and riotous manner on the provisions of Blennerhassett. There was no subordination among the men. Indeed there is no evidence that any effort was made to restrain them. They looked upon the Island and its possessions in much the same light as an army regards the spoils of an enemy. Inflamed by the proclamation of Jefferson; intoxicated by the confiscated liquor, they were possessed with a mad desire to mutilate and destroy. They were aggrieved by the affluence of this wealthy foreigner, with his treasonable designs. Was he not the accomplice of Aaron Burr? Was he not a political refugee? Had there

not always been a mystery that brooded over his Island which they were unable to fathom? Had he not lived like a lord in his castle while some of them in their cabins had supped in penury? At the bottom of it all was the old story of the mob against the aristocracy. Amid that rabble, Mrs. Blennerhassett recognized those she had often befriended with food and shelter. It is asserted upon good authority that some of those who were the first to censure Blennerhassett, and most active in the destruction of his property, were financially indebted to him at the time, and had been indulged by him for years. Like dogs, they turned to bite the hand that had fed them.

In the midst of this outlawry, Colonel Phelps and his party returned from Point Pleasant. For a moment he surveyed the evidences of their vandalism, and then in righteous indignation, his leonine form towered above them, as with clear and ringing voice, his words fell like blows: "Shame on you men!" he cried, "Shame on such conduct! You have disgraced your district, and the cause in which you are concerned!"

The released captives were scarcely through congratulating themselves on the fortunate termination of their first adventure, till they were again seized with apprehension as to what might result from an



The Blennerhassett Lawn.

encounter with this formidable looking new-comer. But they need have given themselves no anxiety. Colonel Phelps was the cavalier he looked. Not only were they treated with the strictest courtesy, but Mrs. Blennerhassett was also reassured by the regret and mortification with which he regarded the shameful acts of his riotous soldiers. "If he had been present," he declared, "such a thing could have never occurred!" She had expressed a desire, as the only hope of joining her husband, to accompany the young men if they were permitted to proceed, and was generously proffered a room in their boat for herself and the children. Colonel Phelps graciously assisted in fitting up the apartment for her convenience, and in removing the necessary furniture, household goods, provisions, and a part of the coveted library to another boat furnished her by the generosity of A. W. Putman, of Belpre, who also assisted with her departure.

On Tuesday morning, Mrs. Blennerhassett bid a last farewell to her Island home. For eight happy years she had presided as Mistress of the mansion now dismantled and tenantless. There it stood with its rambling colonnades, white and stark amid the snows of winter, like a body from which the soul had departed. The lawn was devastated; its arbors and trellises turned to blackened embers; its shrubbery

trampled to the earth; its fences torn down. A herd of cattle was roaming over a field in which the corn was still standing. Bitter tears coursed down her pallid cheeks as she gazed on the desolate scene—alas! no longer home. With sad steps and bowed head, she made her way with the two little boys to the humble abode that had been prepared for her. Lashed to each other, the boats swung out into the river that soon bore them far away from the Deserted Isle.

CHAPTER XIV

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

It will be remembered that Burr took leave of Blennerhassett late in October. Drifting down the Ohio, he landed in Kentucky, and proceeded directly to Lexington. Hardly had he arrived when he was informed that Joseph Daviess, District Attorney for Kentucky, had applied to the Federal Court, then in session at Frankfort, for a warrant to apprehend him for engaging in an enterprise against a power with which the United States was at peace. Daviess was an extreme Federalist, and a majority of the people believing that his action was prompted more by party spite than patriotism, valiantly championed the side of Burr, and as loudly denounced the District Attorney. To the public clamor, the newspapers contributed their farrago of truth and falsehood. The most violent in their pronouncements, was the "Western World," a piratical sheet published at Frankfort, which had been established with the avowed purpose of exposing the aim and objects of the expedition, and which now openly accused Burr of harboring treasonable designs upon the Union.

After deliberating on the motion for two days, Judge Innes finally overruled it. Burr, who had heard of the Attorney's action, hurried over from Lexington, and entered the court-room shortly after Innes had overruled the motion. In a dignified manner, he expressed his approval of the Judge's decision. He was surprised that such a motion had been made, but had voluntarily appeared in order that the Attorney might have a chance of proving his charge, lest advantage be taken of his absence by renewing the motion. Daviess, in no wise disconcerted, declared his readiness to proceed as soon as his witness could be procured. After some consultation, the Judge fixed on the ensuing Wednesday for an investigation of the case. An eye-witness gives an interesting description of what followed:

"Burr awaited the day with easy tranquillity which seemed to fear no danger, and on Wednesday, the court-house was crowded to suffocation. Daviess, upon counting his witnesses, discovered that Davis Floyd, one of the most important, was absent, and with great reluctance asked a postponement of the case. The Judge instantly discharged the grand jury. Colonel Burr then appeared at the bar, accompanied by his counsel, Henry Clay and Colonel Allen. Colonel Burr arose in court, expressed his regret that the grand

jury had been discharged, and inquired the reason. Colonel Daviess replied, and added that Floyd was then in Indiana, attending a session of the Territorial Legislature. Burr calmly desired that the cause of the postponement might be entered upon the record, as well as the reason why Floyd did not attend. He then with great self-possession, and with an air of candor difficult to be resisted, addressed the Court and crowded audience upon the subject of the accusation. His style was without ornament, passion, or fervor; but the spell of a great mind, and daring but calm spirit was felt with singular power by all who heard him. He hoped the good people of Kentucky would dismiss their apprehension of danger from him, if any such really existed. There was really no ground for them, however zealously the Attorney might strive to awaken them. He was engaged in no project inimical to the peace or tranquility of the country, as they would certainly learn whenever the Attorney should be ready, which he greatly apprehended would never be. In the meantime, although private business urgently demanded his presence elsewhere, he felt compelled to give the Attorney one more opportunity of proving his charge, and would patiently await another attack."

The motion for the compulsory process had been

made on Nov. 3rd, but it was not until December 2d that Daviess was able to secure the attendance of Floyd. Another grand jury was accordingly summoned for that day, and Burr, who had come on from Louisville, voluntarily presented himself at Court. Attended by the same counsel as before, he serenely waited for Daviess to proceed. The District Attorney, with evident chagrin, was for the second time compelled to ask for a postponement; this time on account of the absence of John Adair, whose testimony was averred to be indispensable. He plead that the jury be kept impaneled for a few days until he could compel Adair's attendance by attachment. Whereupon, a lengthy and animated encounter sprang up between Clay and the Attorney, which was listened to with breathless interest by the immense crowd that thronged every part of the court-room.

Judge Innes declared that he was unwilling to retain the jury unless some business was brought before them. In order to gain time, Daviess, on the following day, preferred an indictment against John Adair, for setting on foot an unlawful expedition against the dominions of Spain, which the jury promptly pronounced, "not a true bill." He next moved that he should be allowed to attend the grand jury, and question the witnesses. This privilege was resisted by

Clay and Allen as irregular, and without precedent; and it was refused by the Court. At this juncture, a formal indictment was presented against Aaron Burr. "The grand jury then retired, witnesses were sworn and sent up to them, and on the fifth of the month, they returned, as Daviess had expected, 'not a true bill.' In addition to this, the grand jury returned into Court a written declaration, signed by the whole of them, in which, from all the evidence before them, they completely exonerated Burr from any design inimical to the peace or well-being of the country. Colonel Allen instantly moved the Court that a copy of the report of the grand jury should be taken and inserted in the newspapers, which was granted."

Burr was vindicated; his enemies vanquished. Popular applause grew loud in his favor, and a grand ball was given to celebrate his triumph. Alas for the passion of popularity; for the plaudits of the multitude; for the vanity of such short-lived triumphs! Even then, the President's proclamation was sweeping down the Ohio Valley like a blighting sirocco, confirming the suspicions of his enemies; scattering his forces to the winds, and driving his supporters everywhere to cover.

From Lexington, Burr again journeyed to Nashville. Hither also proceeded Graham, the government

spy. But Jefferson's proclamation was before him, having arrived by special messenger on the nineteenth of the month, while he did not put in appearance until four days later. Immediate steps were taken for the arrest of the conspirators and the seizure of the boats on the Cumberland. But Burr was not to be caught napping. On the twelfth, he addressed a letter from somewhere near Nashville to Blennerhassett, saying that he had experienced distressing delays but would be at the mouth of the Cumberland on Sunday, the twenty-third. Of the five boats contracted for on that river, only two were completed. Having received from Jackson seventeen hundred and twenty-five dollars of the amount deposited in his hands in lieu of the unfinished boats, he dropped down the river with the other two, having on board several hired men, and a number of horses.

Blennerhassett's flotilla slipped by Cincinnati the day before the militia were stationed at that point, and floated on down the Ohio without other obstruction. At the Falls, it was joined by three boats with a score or more of men under the command of Davis Floyd. High winds soon after so hindered their progress that it was not until the morning of the twenty-seventh, they arrived at the mouth of the Cumberland. They found Burr in waiting, who on their arrival as-

sembled the men on shore, and addressed them briefly. He told them that here, he had intended to make known his plans, but circumstances rendered it necessary to withhold his designs for the present. Before starting, he purchased a trading-boat with its cargo of bar-iron mattocks, hoes, and a few barrels of apples. In addition to the agricultural outfit, a chest of arms was also taken on board. On the following day, the little fleet of eleven boats, with a crew of about sixty men was set adrift. Contending with wind and tide, it passed out of the mouth of the Ohio, reaching New Madrid on New Year's day, and on January 11th cast moorings at Bayou Pierre, Mississippi, about thirty miles above Natchez. They had fearlessly stopped at the forts *en route*, and exchanged friendly offices with their garrisons. At Fort Massie, a barrel of apples was sent ashore as a holiday present for the family of Captain Bissell, and a recruit added to their number by the name of Jacob Dunbaugh, who was later to figure in the history of the expedition. At Chickasaw Bluffs, now Memphis, Lieutenant Jackson, who commanded the fort, was given money to raise a company for Burr. The noise of proclamations had reached neither of these remote outposts; but on going ashore at Bayou Pierre, the voyagers encountered the wildest alarm.

A body of militia soon took up their station in the

woods near the boats, and the occupants being apprised of their intention to stop them in the morning, pushed off during the night, landing on the Louisiana shore, about four miles below. Burr crossed the river, and sought out the residence of Judge Bruin, whom he had known during the Revolution. Here he read Meade's proclamation, charging him with conspiracy against the government, and with entertaining hostile designs against the dominions of Spain. Here, too, he learned more fully of Wilkinson's treachery, and at once addressed a letter to the Acting Governor, stating that he was on his way to colonize his Washita lands, and disavowing any hostile designs against the tranquility of the country.

Meade was a true patriot, but being a young man was somewhat vain of his temporary authority, and determined to make the most of his opportunity by frustrating Burr's expedition, and at the same time distinguish himself. He hastily issued sundry orders and dispatches arousing the militia of Adams, Claiborne and Jefferson Counties; hurried off one messenger after another to Colonel F. L. Claiborne, at Natchez, to rush forward by carts or pack-horses a thousand pounds of powder, and as much lead as he could spare; to call out every man of his regiment who could carry a fire-lock, and hold them ready to march

at a moment's notice. In one of these dispatches, he ventured the significant remark, that the fate of the country might depend on his movements. On the fifteenth, he repaired by the way of Greenville to the mouth of Cole's Creek, where it had been determined to intercept the flotilla, and where Colonel Fitzpatrick and the Jefferson County militia were stationed. To this point, Colonel Claiborne and his men during the darkness of the night worked their way up the river from Natchez.

The next day, Meade sent George Pointdexter, Attorney General of Mississippi Territory, and Major William Shields, one of his aides, to visit Burr. They were accompanied by Colonel Fitzpatrick, Claiborne having taken charge of the troops at Cole's Creek. Burr received them with his usual suavity, but after reading the Governor's letter, handed him by Major Shields, he spoke with some contempt of the public alarm, and with still more warmth of Wilkinson's perfidy. He declared his innocence of any designs against the United States, and pointing to his boats inquired if there was anything military in their appearance? When told that the militia had assembled at Cole's Creek, twenty-five miles below, with orders to check his further progress, he demanded an interview with the Governor. After some deliberation, a written agreement was entered into by Burr and the

commissioners whereby it was agreed that a meeting with Meade should take place on the following day, at the house of Thomas Calvit, on Cole's Creek; that neither his party nor the inhabitants were to be molested during the interview; that no restraint should be placed upon his liberty, and that he was to be returned in safety to the boats. Pointdexter and Shields then took their leave, and the next morning, Burr in company with Colonel Fitzpatrick and several other gentlemen set out in a row-boat, through a heavy snow-storm, to the appointed meeting-place.

Upon their arrival, the Governor demanded that their former agreement should be annulled; that Burr should surrender unconditionally to the civil authorities; that his boats should be searched, and the military stores be confiscated. He was given fifteen minutes to decide, with the understanding that if he refused, he would be returned to the flotilla, and the soldiers forthwith ordered to capture him and his followers. Realizing that resistance was out of the question, and knowing he had most to fear from the military, he at once surrendered, only requesting that he should not be allowed to fall into the hands of Wilkinson. In company with Shields and Pointdexter, he rode to the town of Washington, the capital of the Territory, and was bound over by Judge Rodney to await the action of the

grand jury, Benjamin Osmun and Lyman Harding acting as sureties in the sum of five thousand dollars for his appearance at court on February second.

During the fortnight that intervened, Burr and his associates succeeded in allaying the fears of the populace, and his fine words and graceful bearing won them many friends. He was a frequent guest of Colonel Osmun and Major Guion, who introduced him to many of their friends. He was made welcome in the best homes in the neighborhood, and ball and banquet were given in his honor by the well-to-do planters of Adams County.

On the day appointed, in company with his attorneys, William Shields and Lyman Harding, he presented himself at court. Judges Thomas Rodney and Peter B. Bruin presided. A grand jury was selected, and the court adjourned until the following day. After examining the evidence submitted, Pointdexter moved the discharge of the jury, on the ground that there had been no testimony submitted that brought the offenses charged against Burr within the jurisdiction of the courts of the Territory, and, moreover, that the Supreme Court of the Territory possessed only appellate and not original jurisdiction in any case; hence the prisoner should be removed to a court having competent jurisdiction. His motion, however, was overruled, and to his further discomfiture, the grand

jury, on Wednesday, February 4th, reported that, "On due investigation of the evidence brought before them, are of the opinion that Aaron Burr has not been guilty of any crime or misdemeanor against the United States, or of this Territory, or given any just cause of alarm or inquietude to the good people of the same." Not satisfied with this, they further presented grievances against Meade and the military authorities for their unwarranted arrest of said Aaron Burr.

That afternoon the grand jury was discharged; whereupon Burr demanded a release from his recognizance. This the Court refused, and Judge Rodney, without reason or precedent, bound him over for his appearance from day to day. Reports by this time had reached his ears of a military seizure by Governor Williams, who had just returned from North Carolina. So far, he had thwarted the military authorities as well as the spies of Wilkinson, who fully two months before had pledged the tempting offer of five thousand dollars for his life, and whose patrol, it was currently reported, was on the way from New Orleans to effect his capture.

Thursday morning he did not appear in court, and on February 6th Governor Williams offered a reward of two thousand dollars for his apprehension and delivery to either the Governor of Mississippi Territory or the President of the United States.

CHAPTER XV

THE BUBBLE BURSTED

ON the Louisiana shore the followers of Aaron Burr watched and waited, with ill-concealed impatience at his detention by the Mississippi authorities. In the beginning, they were seriously annoyed by the action of the militia; especially by the interference of a certain Major Flaherty, and his treatment of Davis Floyd. Comfort Tyler, too, was taken from his boat by a squad of militia, and along with several others, was obliged to testify against Burr at Washington. On January 19th, the boats were searched by Colonel Fitzpatrick and his men, under an order of Meade, and an inventory taken of all the property and stores. Two days later, word was received that Captain Davison and a party of dragoons had been detailed by Fitzpatrick to search for arms, supposed to have been concealed in the brush.

Just what disposition was made of their meager military store is not known. The story is told that one dark night, as the flotilla pushed out from Petit Gulf, Burr, who had been sitting abstractedly before

the rude fire-place in one of the boats, suddenly started up from his reverie. Seizing an ax, he directed his attendant to make an opening in the side of the boat, through which the chest of arms was lowered into the turbid waters of the Mississippi. This story, founded upon the testimony of Jacob Dunbaugh, a creature of Wilkinson's, who with a musket joined the expedition at Fort Massie, on account of its origin is not considered altogether trustworthy. Blennerhassett recorded in his journal, that upon learning of Davison's approach, "A party was sent out by — to obviate effectually the success of the design." At all events no searching party ever brought to light any evidence of such military equipment.

On the night of January 25th, the fleet drifted down the river to a point opposite the mouth of Cole's Creek, having in company the boat of Thomas Butler, on which the family of Blennerhassett and the young gentlemen from Pittsburg arrived a day or two before. Here the report reached them that Captain Shaw, of New Orleans, with nine or ten boats was approaching Natchez, a few miles below, with orders from the Secretary of War to arrest Burr, and destroy the boats under his command. By this time, general disorder prevailed. A total disregard of all authority was shown by the men; and to add to the confusion, dis-

agreements that had long been hatching, now broke out openly among the leaders, who threatened to turn over the provisions in payment of the demands of some of the company who were determined upon leaving. Had they carried out their threats, it would have mattered little, as the end was nigh at hand. For the last time, they were visited by Burr, who told them that they could take what property there was, and make the most of it; and if there was not enough to satisfy their demands, they might go on to the Washita and take up what lands they wanted. He told them he had stood his trial and was acquitted, but they were going to take him again, and that he had determined on flight. The boats were accordingly taken on to Natchez, where some of them were chartered and others sold. Such provisions as found a ready sale were disposed of; the money divided among the men, and the remainder placed in store.

It is alleged that two or three days after Burr's disappearance, a negro boy, mounted on one of his horses, and wearing a coat belonging to him, was seized opposite the site of the flotilla. Sewed up in the cape of the coat, so the story goes, was found the following note, addressed to Tyler and Floyd: "If you are yet together, keep so, and I will join you tomorrow night. In the meantime, put all your arms in perfect order.

Ask the bearer no questions, but tell him all you may think I wish to know. He does not know that this is from me, nor where I am." This note is now believed to have been a forgery, and the story of its discovery a myth, but it resulted in the wholesale arrest of his followers, who were seized at Natchez. However, all except Blennerhassett, Floyd, Tyler, and Ralston were released as soon as the excitement had subsided.

Burr remained in the vicinity of Colonel Osmun's for the space of a week after the Governor's offer of a reward for his capture. When his friends were no longer able to shield him from apprehension, it was determined that he should seek safety in flight. Disguised as a boatman, and mounted on the Colonel's fastest horse, he bid his host adieu, and set out with Chester Ashley as a guide.

On the night of February 18th, they rode into the village of Wakefield, Washington County, Alabama. It was about eleven o'clock, but the moon gave sufficient light to distinguish objects at some little distance. As they approached, they observed a man standing at the door of a house near the roadside. Burr, who was thirty or forty yards ahead of his companion, passed near the door without stopping or speaking, but when Ashley came up, he stopped and inquired the

way to Major Hinson's, a man of importance in that neighborhood. The man at the door, who was a young lawyer by the name of Nicholas Perkins, pointed out the way, but informed him that the Major was not at home, and that they would experience some difficulty in getting there that night on account of the late rise in the waters that lay *en route*. The stranger, however, after making some inquiries about the crossing, put spurs to his horse and hurried away after his companion.

The young lawyer's suspicions were aroused by this midnight journey. He was struck by the silence of the horseman who had first passed; by the apparent unwillingness of the travelers to stop at a public house, and their determination to proceed to Hinson's, although informed that he was away from home. Possibly, they were robbers, or could one of them be Aaron Burr endeavoring to make his escape? He entered the house which was occupied by the Sheriff, Theodore Brightwell, and communicated his suspicions; urging the Sheriff, who had gone to bed, to arise, and accompany him to Hinson's. The Sheriff was not anxious but finally agreed to go along. After securing horses, they made their way to the Major's, where they found the travelers. When they entered, Burr was in the kitchen warming himself, but soon came into the room where Ashley and Perkins were seated.

The lawyer observed him attentively, but experienced some difficulty in getting a full view of his face. Once, Burr glanced quickly in his direction, apparently to ascertain whether he were being watched. It was but the flash of an eye, but it was enough. Perkins had heard of those eyes before, and they fully confirmed his suspicions. He immediately determined on taking measures to apprehend the strangers, and after giving some excuse, took his leave; but not before carelessly mentioning the way he was going, indicating an opposite course to that which he thought would be pursued by the travelers. As soon as he was beyond reach of observation, he took the road to Fort Stoddart. Riding to Mannahabba Bluff, he secured a canoe from Joseph Bates, and the assistance of a negro to paddle it, arriving at the fort just as day was breaking. The Commandant, Edmund P. Gaines, was at once apprised of his mistrust of the strangers, and as soon as they could make ready, he and four dragoons started back with Perkins in search of them. They came upon them and Brightwell about nine o'clock in the morning, not more than two miles from Hinson's house. Captain Gaines rode forward and addressed the person suspected by Perkins.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that I have the honor of addressing Colonel Burr?"

"I am a traveler in the country," was the reply, "and do not recognize your right to ask such a question."

Whereupon, Gaines responded, "I arrest you at the instance of the Federal Government."

"By what authority do you arrest a traveler on the highway, on his own private business?" retorted Burr.

"I am an officer in the army," answered the Captain, "and I hold in my hand the proclamation of the President and the Governor, directing your arrest."

"You are a young man," replied Burr, "and may I ask if you are aware of the responsibility you assume?"

"Perfectly," said Gaines, "and I know my duty as well."

Burr protested, still insisting on the liability that would be incurred by his arrest.

But Gaines remained firm. "You must accompany me to Fort Stoddart," said he, "where you will be treated with all the respect due your former rank as Vice-President, so long as you do not attempt to escape."

Burr looked at the young Captain for a moment as if admiring his firmness, and then indicated his willingness to accompany him. Bidding good-bye to Ashley, who with the Sheriff returned to Wakefield, he wheeled his horse, and with Captain Gaines took up his way to Fort Stoddart.

During the two weeks he remained here, he dined with the family of the Commandant, and made himself useful by ministering to the brother of Captain Gaines, who was sick; played chess with the Captain's wife, who was an accomplished lady and the daughter of Judge Toolmin, winning the hearts of all with his charming manners and brilliant conversation. No ill-will could be held against one in that section whose only offense was to rid them of the Spaniards up the country. Ashley was also gaining him friends by his representations, and it was with a feeling of relief that Captain Gaines at last completed his arrangements to forward his distinguished prisoner to the seat of government, a thousand miles away; half the distance which lay through an almost unbroken wilderness. The journey was begun March 5th, and the leave-taking was like that of old friends. A boat had been made ready, and accompanied by a squad of soldiers under Gaines, Burr went on board and was rowed up the Alabama and into Lake Tensas. They stopped at the house of John Mills, and it is said that the ladies of the house were so impressed with Burr's misfortunes that they wept through sympathy. At the government boat-yard, afterward the scene of Fort Mims' massacre, the prisoner was turned over to the guard that was to conduct him to Washington. This

guard consisted of eight picked men under the command of Nicholas Perkins; as follows: Thomas Malone and John Mills, of Alabama, John Henry, of Tennessee, Henry B. Slade, of North Carolina, two brothers by the name of McCormack, from Kentucky, and two United States soldiers. They were all mounted, and the soldiers armed with muskets, the others, with holster pistols. Fearing the fascination of Burr, Perkins took his men aside and exacted a solemn promise to stand by him, and to avoid all conversation with the prisoner unless absolutely necessary.

Plunging into the wilderness, they followed the Indian trail that led to Fort Wilkinson, on the Oconee, traveling a distance of thirty miles the first day. At night, the only tent carried by the company was pitched for the prisoner. Stretched on a blanket, encircled by the armed sentry, his weather-stained beaver thrown carelessly aside, lay the late Vice-President. The blazing fire threw a weird glare across the silent camp, into the depths of the boundless wild that hemmed it in. From a swamp near by, where the hobbled horses fed on the brake, came the tinkle of bells. High over head the winds moaned in the desolate pines. In the dark recesses of the forest could be heard the howling of hungry wolves, and still farther away the panther's answering cry.

Oppressed by the dreary solitude; surrounded by a guard with whom he dare not converse; shut in with his own gloomy reflections; the captive's only relief was in the contemplation of what the future might bring forth, or in musing on far-away scenes and old familiar faces. He forgot his blasted hopes and blighted ambitions. The past lay before him like a dream. He saw two orphans, a brother and sister of tender years, thrown upon the world to buffet with its storms and battle alone with its temptations. He saw the boy of fragile frame apply himself to tasks and master subjects that daunted his comrades of older years. He saw the stripling with fair face and wonderful eyes crowned with the highest honors his *alma mater* could bestow. He beheld a pale youth in the sinuous ranks of an army that wound its way through the mazes of a northern forest; struggling through bogs; climbing over precipices; fording swollen rivers; imperilled by storm and tempest, and angry waters; suffering from hunger, cold, and sickness; enduring, without complaint, the toils and hardships of the wilderness, until amid the blinding snows, they stand before the rock-walled city on the St. Lawrence. In the darkness, he climbs, over glaciers, up ravines; tearing away palisades until the fort is in sight. Suddenly, there is a flash—a roar—his com-

panions, torn and bleeding, fall around him! His General is prostrate! His blood, red and warm, stains the snow in the pale moonlight! Now, he has him in his arms—now on his shoulders—reeling under his load, he staggers down the ravine! It is still night, and he is standing by the river. He cannot see for the fog, but he knows it is not the St. Lawrence, and that it is not Montgomery's army that is fleeing, but Washington's; not from Quebec but Long Island. He is borne onward with the fleetness of the wind. Now he rescues a straggling party cut off from retreat on Manhattan Island. Now he leads a forlorn hope at Monmouth. Now he is guarding the lines at Westchester.

The scene changes. The enemy's hosts are scattered; over the blue sea vanishes his last sail, and peace with its harmonies, and love with its victories follow after. He stands with his happy bride in the little church at Paramus. He makes his home at Richmond Hill. He lives like a prince in his hall, with his table, his servants, and horses. He entertains the wise, the witty, and noble. He sees his lovely daughter, Theodosia, his hope and pride, petted and admired by all. Step by step he has mounted fame's fair ladder. He is recognized as his city's most successful lawyer. He has acquired celebrity in his adopted state as a legis-

lator. He has taken rank as a senator among the law-makers of his country. He has been elected Vice-President of the United States. Just one more step till he reaches the summit of his ambitions. The heights grow dizzy—clouds gather—the tempest thickens! He hears the muttering of factions—his enemies gather round him! The storm breaks—fame's frail stair-way sways under him! There is charge and counter-charge—figures are moving like ghosts on Hoboken's tragic shores! A pistol shot rings in his ears—his face pales; his rival's is ghastly—a twig flutters in the air—an enemy lies prostrate on the earth! The toppling ladder collapses—he is encompassed with darkness—he is overcome by calumny—he flees before the storm!

After war, peace; after tempest, sunshine. Brighter skies break above him—he wanders in a southern land—visions of still sunnier shores rise before him. A veritable el Dorado invites him — riches butrivaling the fabulous city of Manoa lie before him. Fame beckons him—siren voices lure him—glory and gold await him. He will enter in and possess—he will seize the golden scepter—he will wear the flashing crown—he will ascend the throne of the Montezumas—he will be Emperor!

He awakes—he starts—he grasps for his sword!

Alas! his empty hand falls aimlessly from his rough boatman's jacket. His open eyes behold only the dying embers, the gray ashes, the brooding shadows of the forest. The tinkling of the bells have ceased; the moaning winds sunk to low whisperings; the howl of a single wolf grows faint and far away, and sleep like a mantle hovers over all. Burr rose with the dawn, and after partaking of a light breakfast cheerfully took his place in line. On account of the narrow trail, they rode in single file; a part of the guard ahead; Burr in the center, and the others behind. The elements conspired to render their march hazardous and fatiguing. The rain poured down for days at a time; the streams were swollen to torrents; swamps and rivers lay in their way; Indians thronged their trail, and wild beasts hung about their camp. In face of all, the dauntless Perkins held on his course in gloomy silence; only venturing an occasional remark regarding the weather, the horses, the creeks, or Indians. Yet a kind of comradeship grew up between the prisoner and his guard, who always treated him with great respect. On his part, he was courteous and uncomplaining; at no time during the entire journey showing either sign of weakness or fatigue. They passed within eight miles of the present site of Montgomery; they swam Lime, Dubahatchee, and Calabee creeks. When they

reached the Chattahoochie, their effects were ferried over in a canoe by an Indian, while their horses swam alongside. The Flint and the Ocmulgee were crossed in the same way. It was not until they had reached Fort Wilkinson on the Oconee—about eighty miles from the Georgia and South Carolina line that they were able to secure the service of a ferry-boat.

A little farther on, they came to a rude tavern, kept by a man by the name of Bevin. The arrival of such a party was a matter of much concern to the astonished landlord. As they sat quietly about the great fire, enjoying the hospitality of a civilized roof—the first that had sheltered them the whole way—the curiosity of their host overcame his prudence, and he ventured to inquire from whence they came. Upon learning that they were from the “Bigby settlements,” he at once fired a volley of questions respecting Aaron Burr: “Had he yet been taken?” “Was he not a very bad man?” “Was not everybody afraid of him?” Perkins was much annoyed; his men hung their heads in embarrassment, but Burr, who had been sitting in a corner with bowed head, could stand it no longer. Raising himself, and fixing his blazing eyes on the inquisitor, he said, “I am Aaron Burr! What is it you want with me?”

The frightened landlord stood aghast; the sharpness

of that glance; the majesty of manner, and the cutting tones completely unmanning him until he trembled like a leaf. From that minute, he was obsequious in his attentions to his guests, but not another word did he utter during their entire stay.

As they neared the confines of South Carolina, Perkins became more vigilant than ever. Burr had always been a favorite in this state; his son-in-law Colonel Alston was numbered among its wealthy and influential citizens, besides he had many other warm friends he had made during his visits to his daughter. His captors, therefore, had good reasons for fearing some attempt would be made to liberate their prisoner. They kept well to the north, avoiding the towns and larger settlements till at length they came to the village of Chester. Before entering it, two men were placed in front of Burr, two on either side, and the other two behind. The way led past a tavern before which stood a number of men, while within could be heard the sound of music and dancing. Suddenly, Burr threw himself from his horse, and cried in a loud voice, "I am Aaron Burr, under military arrest, and claim the protection of the civil authorities."

Perkins, pistol in hand, and several of his men leaped to the ground, and ordered him to remount.

"I will not," declared Burr defiantly.

Perkins, not wishing to harm him, threw down his pistol, and being a man of powerful frame and great strength, caught him around the waist and lifted him into the saddle, as Thomas Malone caught the reins of the bridle, and hurried his horse away. Before the bystanders, who stood looking at each other in wonder, could recover from their astonishment, the strange cavalcade had disappeared from view.

When they were safely away from the village, a halt was called, and a council held. Burr was much moved, and for the time seemed overcome by his misfortunes. Stung by the ingratitude of the government for which he had fought and helped to form; hunted down through the wilds like a common outlaw; his fortune swept away; his ambitions shattered; a helpless prisoner, crying in vain for the protection of a state in which his daughter lived, and of which her husband was soon to become the Governor, he is said to have wept bitterly. It may be true, but if so, it is the only recorded instance of his losing that remarkable self command through long years of trial and disappointment.

It was decided that it was no longer safe to proceed with the prisoner on horse-back, and Perkins returned to Chester to procure a carriage. He succeeded in purchasing a gig, and before nightfall overtook his

party. Burr took his place in the gig, which was driven by one of the guard, and in this manner was conducted without incident as far as Fredericksburg, Virginia. Here dispatches were received from Washington to convey the prisoner to Richmond, which place was reached by stage on March 26th. Burr was taken to the Eagle tavern, and Perkins and his men after recuperating continued their journey to Washington, where they received their reward, and afterward returned home by way of Tennessee.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRIAL

Nor a murmur or complaint had passed the lips of Aaron Burr during that trying journey through the wilderness; yet it was with an evident feeling of relief that he again found himself in touch with the comforts of civilization. He was moreover gratified that the business, once and for all, was in some way, to be brought to a conclusion. In a court of justice he was as much at home as a clansman on his native heath; and here, at last, he was assured a final trial for life and liberty.

He remained under military guard at the old Eagle tavern until Monday, March 30th, when he was turned over to the civil authorities by virtue of a warrant issued by the Chief Justice of the United States. On that day between the hours of twelve and one, he was conducted from his lodgings by Major Scott, Marshal of the District of Virginia, and two deputies, through a silent and attentive concourse of citizens to a retired room in the same building. Here, he was given a preliminary hearing before Chief Justice Marshall to

determine whether there was sufficient cause to commit him for trial. The evidence submitted by Mr. Hay, the District Attorney, on behalf of the United States consisted of a copy of the record in the case of Bollman and Swartwout, who on arriving at the seat of government had been examined by Judge Marshall and for want of evidence had been discharged by him on February 21st, together with the affidavits of General Eaton, General Wilkinson, and some others. Major Perkins also stated verbally the manner of Colonel Burr's arrest and conveyance to Richmond.

The officers of the court, the counsel, the single witness, and a few friends were alone admitted; but it had been agreed in accordance with an expressed wish of the citizens that if a discussion should become necessary, the court should be adjourned to the Capitol. Consequently, on the second day, the Chief Justice took his seat in the Hall of the House of Delegates. Mr. Hay moved that the prisoner should be committed on two charges: First, for a high misdemeanor, in setting on foot, within the United States, a military expedition against the dominions of the King of Spain. Second, for treason, in assembling an armed force, with the design to seize the city of New Orleans, to revolutionize the territory attached thereto, and to separate the Western from the Atlantic states. He

stated the first offense to be a violation of the fifth section of an act of Congress, passed June 5th, 1794, entitled, "An act in addition to the act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States," continued in force for limited periods by several succeeding laws, and continued without limitation by an act passed in 1797. He attempted to support the charge by Burr's letter to Wilkinson, insisting that it showed probable cause to suspect him of the offence. He next went into a minute examination of the evidence exhibited in the case of Bollman and Swartwout to show that the prisoner had committed an act of treason, relying on the opinion of the Supreme Court as supporting the cause for which he contended, and closed by commenting on Colonel Burr's flight from justice.

Mr. Wickham and Mr. Randolph, Burr's counsel, replied to his charges, stated the circumstances of the case, argued that there was no evidence to show an act of treason had been committed; that there was little proof to sustain the second charge, but if deemed sufficient to put him on trial, it was aailable offence; that as the prisoner was supposed to have fewer friends here than in almost any other part of the country, it would be unreasonable to require bail of him in a large amount.

Colonel Burr then rose and addressed the Court,

"not," as he said, "to remedy any omission of his counsel, who had done great justice to the subject, but to state a few facts, and repel some observations of a personal nature. The present inquiry involved a simple question of treason or misdemeanor. According to the Constitution, treason consisted in acts; an arrest could only be justified by the suspicion of acts; whereas, in this case, his honor was invited to issue a warrant upon mere conjecture. Alarms existed without cause. Mr. Wilkinson alarmed the President, and the President alarmed the people of Ohio. He appealed to historical facts. No sooner did he understand that suspicions were entertained in Kentucky of the nature and design of his movements, than he hastened to meet an investigation. The prosecution not being prepared, he was discharged. That he then went to Tennessee. While there he heard that the attorney for the District of Kentucky was preparing another prosecution against him; that he immediately returned to Frankfort, presented himself before the court, and again was honorably discharged; that what had happened in the Mississippi Territory was equally well-known; that there he was not only acquitted by the grand jury, but that they went farther, and censured the conduct of the government; if there had been really any cause for alarm, it must have been

felt by the people of that part of the country; that the manner of his descent down the river was a fact which put at defiance all rumors about treason or misdemeanor; that the nature of his equipments clearly evinced that his object was purely peaceable and agricultural; that this fact alone ought to overthrow the testimony against him; that his designs were honorable, and would have been useful to the United States. His flight, as it was termed, had been mentioned as evidence of guilt. He asked, at what time did he fly? In Kentucky he invited inquiry, and that inquiry terminated in a firm conviction of his innocence; that alarms were first great in the Mississippi Territory, and orders had been issued to seize and destroy the persons and property of himself and party; that he had endeavored to undeceive the people, and convince them that he had no designs hostile to the United States, but that twelve hundred men were in arms for a purpose not yet developed; the people could not be deceived, and he was acquitted, and promised the protection of the government; but the promise could not be performed; the arm of military power could not be resisted; that he knew there were military orders to seize his person and property, and transport him to a distance from that place; that he was assured by an officer of an armed boat, that it was

lying in the river ready to receive him on board. Was it his duty to remain there thus situated? That he took the advice of his best friends, pursued the dictates of his own judgment, and abandoned a country where the laws ceased to be the sovereign power; that the charge stated in a hand-bill that he had forfeited his recognizance, was false; that he had forfeited no recognizance; if he had forfeited any recognizance, he asked, why no proceedings had taken place for the breach of it? If he was to be prosecuted for such breach, he wished to know why he was brought to this place? Why not carry him to the place where the breach had happened? That more than three months had elapsed since the order of the government had issued to seize him and bring him to that place; yet it was pretended that sufficient time had not been allowed to adduce testimony in support of the prosecution. He asked why the guard who had conducted him to that place avoided every magistrate on the way, unless from a conviction that they were acting without lawful authority? Why had he been debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and not even permitted to write to his daughter? That in the State of South Carolina, where he happened to see three men together, he demanded the interposition of the civil authority; that it was from military despotism,

from the tyranny of a military escort, that he wished to be delivered, not from an investigation into his conduct, or from the operation of the laws of his country. He concluded that there were three courses that might be pursued,—an acquittal, or a commitment for treason, or for a misdemeanor; that no proof existed in support of either, but what was contained in the affidavits of Eaton and Wilkinson, abounding in crudities and absurdities.”

Mr. Rodney, the Attorney General, then closed the argument on behalf of the United States. On the following day, the Chief Justice delivered his opinion in writing. “The fact to be proved in this case,” ran the decision, “is an act of public notoriety. It must exist in the view of the world, or it cannot exist at all. The assembling of forces to levy war is a visible transaction, and numbers must witness it. It is therefore capable of proof; and when time to collect this proof has been given, it ought to be adduced, or suspicion becomes ground too weak to stand upon. Several months had elapsed since this fact did occur, if it ever occurred. More than five weeks had elapsed since the opinion of the Supreme Court had declared the necessity of proving the fact, if it exists. Why was it not proved? If, in November or December last, a body of troops had been assembled on the Ohio, it is im-

possible to suppose that affidavits establishing the fact could not have been obtained by the last of March."

"I cannot doubt," continues he, "that means to obtain information have been taken on the part of the prosecution; if it existed, I cannot doubt the practicability of obtaining it; and its non-production at this late hour does not, in my opinion, leave me at liberty to give those suspicions which grow out of other circumstances that weight to which at an earlier day they might have been entitled.

"I shall not, therefore, insert in the commitment the charge of high treason. I repeat, that this is the less important, because it detracts nothing from the right of the attorney to prefer an indictment for high treason, should he be furnished with the necessary testimony."

The prisoner was accordingly held to answer the charge of high misdemeanor only, leaving the grand jury to investigate the charge of treason. Some discussion arose as to the amount of bail, the sum finally being fixed at ten thousand dollars. Five gentlemen of Richmond agreed to act as sureties for Colonel Burr's appearance at the next Circuit Court of the United States to be held in that city, beginning the 22d of May following, and thereupon he was released from custody.

It was evident to Burr that the coming trial would

prove the supreme struggle of his life—indeed, for his life. He was to be held, not for any infraction of the law, but to answer for the most heinous of crimes. He was to be tried amid a populace who accepted his guilt as a foregone conclusion. He was to face a jury biased and blinded by the tide of popular prejudice. But this was not all; Jefferson had declared him guilty; had heralded it throughout the length and breadth of the land. So thoroughly had he committed himself in his proclamations, his messages to Congress, his denunciations through his agents and emissaries that an acquittal would overwhelm his administration with confusion and ridicule. Burr must be convicted at whatever price—must be crushed, if it required all the power and machinery of the government to do it. No wonder his victim was constrained to write, "The most indefatigable industry is used by the agents of the government, and they have money at command without stint. If I were possessed of the same means I would not only foil the prosecutors but render them ridiculous and infamous."

Deputies were sent to Wood County to secure witnesses and take depositions; letters were dispatched to Tennessee soliciting testimony; agents were sent into Mississippi to gather evidence; hand-bills were scattered broadcast, calling on all good citizens to

come forward and volunteer whatever proof they might possess. Nor was Burr less active on his part. He scented the coming fray like a warrior, keen with the zest of battle. Every faculty was alert; the training of a lifetime concentrated in every endeavor. His counsel was employed; his armor secured; his defenses made ready. Henceforth, he was, to employ his own phraseology, "busy, busy, busy from morning till night—from night till morning."

At last the day came, and with it such a throng as Richmond with its six thousand inhabitants had never before witnessed. It poured in steady streams from town and village and countryside; from near and far, until street and tavern and assembly-hall were in a state of feverish congestion. There were men from Washington, New York, and Philadelphia; from Pittsburg, Marietta, and Wood County Court House; from Cincinnati, Kentucky, and the Mississippi Territory. There were boatmen, planters, frontiersmen, gentlemen, politicians, and adventurers galore. The men of the East jostled and joked with the men of the West; raftsmen elbowed with statesmen; backwoodsmen drank with city-bred; it was an assembly cosmopolitan, yet representatively American. There was Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, mounted on the steps of a corner grocery, declaiming furiously against the perse-

cutions of Jefferson, and extolling the heroism of Burr. There was Captain William Eaton, self-styled General, "strutting on the streets, tricked out in colored clothes and Turkish sash, tippling in the taverns and prating of his wrongs." There was Commodore Thomas Truxton, bluff, undaunted, and incorruptible. There was William B. Giles, Republican leader in the Senate, and John Randolph, of Roanoke, leader of the insurgent faction in the House. There were Senators John Smith and Jonathan Dayton, allies of Burr; Colonel Dupiestre, Dr. Bollman, and John Graham, the government spy. There was young Winfield Scott, who along with the surging throng struggled for admission to the Assembly Hall, and who from his lofty perch on the massive lock of the great doors could look over the bared heads of the immense crowd gathered within. Every available niche was occupied; standing room was at a premium, even lawyers of long years' practice were crowded to the wall. But it was worth all the effort it cost to get a glimpse of such an assembly. Never before had such an array of legal talent met within Virginia's old House of Burgesses. Never before or since has the country beheld a trial of equal interest.

On the bench were John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States and Cyrus Griffin, Judge of the Dis-

trict of Virginia. At the head of the prosecution stood George Hay, District Attorney for Virginia, a son-in-law of Colonel James Monroe, and a zealous Jeffersonian. His ablest assistant was William Wirt, engaged at the personal request of the President. He was at this time thirty-five years of age, handsome, graceful, a brilliant orator, and a popular favorite. After him came Alexander MacRae, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, possessed of a sharp tongue and unquestionable ability. Caesar A. Rodney, Attorney General, was also present at the beginning, but he was unequal to the situation and did not tarry long, leaving Hay in command of the forces of the government.

The counsel for the defense was not less imposing; indeed it was observed from the earliest stages of the proceedings that the personnel of the prosecution was completely outclassed. First, there was Burr himself who superintended every movement of his staff. "Not a step was taken, not a point conceded without his express concurrence." Of his assistants, Edmund Randolph, of Virginia, stood highest in point of age, experience, and position. He had been Attorney General and Secretary of State under Washington, and Governor and Attorney General of his own state. Next in line was John Wickham, generally regarded as the ablest lawyer of Richmond. His talents were

varied and resourceful; his eloquence, persuasive; his wit, keen. In presence, manner, and endowment, he possessed all the elements that went to make up the ideal barrister of that day. Then there was Luther Martin, of Maryland, described by Blennerhassett as "the whole rear-guard of Burr's forensic army," by Hugh Mercer as the "Thersites of the law," and by Jefferson as the "Federal Bulldog." He was ungrammatical in speech, coarse in manner, and a mighty drinker, but withal a powerful man with a great mind and big heart. He had a wonderful memory, towered head and shoulders above his fellows in legal learning, and had distinguished himself in the impeachment of Judge Chase, three years before. The youngest of Burr's lawyers was Benjamin Botts, though already eminent as an attorney. He was courageous and dashing, with a keen sense of the ludicrous, and a ready talent of turning all to account. Charles Lee, at one time Attorney General of the United States, also assisted during the latter part of the trial. These with John Baker, better known as "Jack," a certain merry fellow with a crutch and plenty of horse-wit, whose name is mentioned a time or two in the reports, completed the list. Blennerhassett states in his journal that all these lawyers tendered their services gratuitously to Colonel Burr.

In the foreground sat the prisoner surrounded by his counsel, watching the scene with the unruffled mien of a spectator rather than with the intense interest of its central figure. Scrupulously attired in a neat-fitting costume of black, with powdered hair and queue, he looked the very soul of dignity. Self-contained, dignified,—masterful. To all appearance, he was the most indifferent person in all that vast assembly. Of a truth, he was not unworthy all the attention he attracted—the third Vice-President, an ex-Senator, the most successful lawyer of his time, a soldier of acknowledged valor, a man of proven parts, now arraigned for the highest crime in the calendar of his country. It was truly a remarkable pair that confronted each other within the bar. “The Chief Justice,” says Parton, “was in his fifty-second year—one year older than the prisoner—a tall, slender man, with a massive head, without one gray hair, with eyes the finest ever seen, except Burr’s, large, black, and brilliant beyond description. It was often remarked during the trial that two such pair of eyes never looked into one another before.”

There were two stenographers present, Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Robertson. David Robertson’s report of the trial, first published in 1808, occupies more than eleven hundred closely-printed octavo pages, which

explains why little more than a glimpse of the proceedings can be condensed within the limits of this chapter.

On account of the general belief in the prisoner's guilt, some difficulty was encountered in securing a grand jury. A number who were summoned were his political enemies. Senator Giles, who had proposed and advocated the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* in the Senate, and Wilson C. Nicholas, a leading politician and personal enemy of Burr's, were challenged by him and set aside. Joseph Eggleston stated that he had read the deposition of General Eaton in the newspapers; that he had expressed himself with considerable warmth and indignation on the subject and, therefore, felt that it would be both indelicate and improper for him to serve. Whereupon Colonel Burr rose. "Under different circumstances," said he, "I might think and act differently, but the industry which has been used through this country to prejudice my cause, leaves me very little chance, indeed, of an impartial jury. There is very little chance that I can expect a better man to try my cause." Mr. Eggleston was not excused. The panel was here called over, and only fourteen appearing, the name of John Randolph and Dr. William Foushee were added to the list. Upon coming forward, Mr. Randolph asked to be excused on the ground that he had formed an opinion,

not on the case now before the court, but in regard to certain transactions imputed to the prisoner. "I should be wanting in candor to the court and the party accused," declared he, "if I did not say that I have a strong prepossession."

"Really I am afraid," remarked Burr, "that we shall not be able to find any man without this prepossession."

"The rule is," said the Chief Justice, "that a man must not only have formed, but declared an opinion, in order to exclude him from serving on the jury."

"I do not recollect to have declared one," Randolph replied, and he was accordingly sworn in as foreman.

Dr. Foushee stated that he had read the President's Message, General Eaton's deposition, and the publications in the newspapers respecting Colonel Burr, and that he had formed an opinion of his guilt. After some discussion, Dr. Foushee was allowed to withdraw, and Colonel James Barbour summoned in his place, who excepted on account of sentiments unfavorable to Colonel Burr, but the Court deemed his excuse insufficient. The panel now being complete, the grand jury was sworn and charged.

Colonel Burr then asked the Court to instruct the jury as to the admissibility of certain evidence which he had reason to believe would be offered. To this

Hay objected; he hoped that the Court would not grant any particular indulgence to Colonel Burr who stood on the same footing with every other man charged with a crime.

"Would to God," retorted Burr, "that I did stand on the same ground with every other man. This is the first time I have been permitted to enjoy the rights of a citizen. How have I been brought here?"

On the third day, Hay made a motion to commit the prisoner on a charge of high treason. "On his examination," remarked the Attorney, "there was no evidence of an overt act, and he was committed for a misdemeanor only. The evidence is different now." In the discussion following, it transpired that the object of Hay was to commit the prisoner to jail. It all resulted in the voluntary offer of Burr to double his bail-bond, which was duly accepted by the Court.

Then another cause for delay was announced by the prosecution. General Wilkinson, who was declared to be their leading witness, had not yet arrived from New Orleans. The counsel for the defense urged their readiness to proceed. They were ready on Friday; on Saturday. Why was Wilkinson not there? Had the prosecution not been given time to procure its witnesses? The cry was taken up in Richmond and the regions beyond that it was only another at-

tempt to harass the prisoner. Still, the court was adjourned from day to day; still, it waited from week to week for the coming hero. Meantime, neither side was idle. There were spirited altercations among the attorneys, and learned disquisitions on the part of the Chief Justice. Whole days were consumed in argument, and much time wasted in unnecessary wrangling. One day as this war of words was going forward, a legal bomb was hurled into the camp of the prosecution. A motion was made by Burr that a subpoena be directed to President Jefferson, requiring him to come before the court with a certain letter from Wilkinson and the documents accompanying it; together with the order issued at his instance through the army and navy concerning Burr. The debate which followed occupied two whole days, and extended into the third. The prosecution protested vehemently. It was an unheard of proceeding; without precedent in the annals of jurisprudence. Under the circumstances, the prisoner had no right to make such a demand; besides, what could it avail?

But the defense wanted the documents, and realizing their advantage bore down the harder. The Chief Executive was amenable to the law just the same as any other citizen; his sanctity was not inviolable. "All that we want is the copies of some papers,"

roared Luther Martin, "and the original of another. This is a peculiar case, sir. The President has undertaken to prejudge my client by declaring that 'of his guilt there can be no doubt.' He has assumed the knowledge of the Supreme Being himself, and pretended to search the heart of my highly respected friend. He has proclaimed him a traitor in the face of that country which has rewarded him. He has let slip the dogs of war, the hell-hounds of persecution, to hunt down my friend. And would this President of the United States, who has raised all this absurd clamor, pretend to keep back the papers which are wanted for this trial, where life itself is at stake? It is a sacred principle, that in all such cases, the accused has the right to all the evidence which is necessary for his defense."

It was admittedly a great strategic move, and if disregarded, its ultimate result would be to discredit the President. The Chief Justice, after due consideration, decided that the subpoena duces tecum might issue. Jefferson indignantly refused to appear; thereby adding another prerogative to the dignity of his office. Marshall, fearing a warfare of more formidable missiles than words might ensue, let the matter rest, only insisting that the papers be forthcoming, with which requirement the President was constrained to comply.

On the 13th of June, Wilkinson, who had kept the grand jury waiting for nearly a month, made his appearance at court. His debut upon the scene is graphically portrayed by Washington Irving who was present at the trial, and whose account of the affair is preserved in the first volume of his life and letters: "Wilkinson strutted into court and took his stand in a parallel line with Burr on his right hand. Here he stood for a moment, swelling like a turkey-cock and bracing himself up for the encounter of Burr's eye. The latter did not take any notice of him until the Judge directed the Clerk to swear General Wilkinson. At the mention of the name Burr turned his head, looked him full in the face, with one of his piercing regards, swept his eyes over his whole person from head to foot, as if to scan his dimensions, and then coolly resumed his former position and went on conversing with his counsel as tranquilly as ever. The whole look was over in an instant; it was an admirable one. There was no appearance of study or constraint in it: no affectation of disdain or defiance; a slight expression of contempt played over his countenance, such as you would have shown regarding any person to whom you were indifferent, but whom you considered mean and contemptible."

Wilkinson and scores of other witnesses were now

sent before the grand jury, and on June 24th, while a heated debate was in progress in regard to serving an attachment on General Wilkinson for endeavoring to prevent the free course of testimony, that body with Randolph at their head filed into the crowded courtroom, and reported four indictments as follows: An indictment against Aaron Burr for treason, and another for misdemeanor; also indictments for treason and misdemeanor against "Herman Blannerhassett." A discussion followed, in which Burr's counsel contended that he might still be held on bail, but the Chief Justice announced that he was under the necessity of committing him, and late in the day he was conducted through a great concourse of silent onlookers to the city jail. The room in which he was confined was the common apartment where debtors and felons, white and black, were promiscuously huddled together to the number of a dozen or two, who regarded him with expressions of surprise and awe. No bed was prepared for him, but at his request the jailer sent him an old blanket, in which he wrapped himself, while a billet of wood served him for a pillow. The inmates of the prison gathered about the newcomer in silence and wonder, as he marked out the limits desired for himself, and charged them not to trespass on them. It is needless to say his wish was

respected, but as he lay down to rest they could not repress their astonishment that one who was accustomed to all the elegancies of life and the applause of multitudes could sleep amid such surroundings.

Two days later his counsel applied to the Court to have him removed to more comfortable and convenient quarters, depicting in the strongest terms the miserable condition of the prison in which he was confined. An order was accordingly made to remove him to the front room of the house occupied by Luther Martin of which the shutters and door were to be barred, and about which a guard of seven men were to be stationed for his safe keeping.

The grand jury by this time had made presentments against Ex-Senator Johnathan Dayton, of New Jersey, John Smith, Ex-Senator from Ohio, Comfort Tyler and Israel Smith, of New York, and Davis Floyd, of the Territory of Indiana, for treason against the United States in levying war against the same, at Blennerhassett Island in the County of Wood, and State of Virginia, on the 13th day of December, 1806. On the same day Burr was formally arraigned to answer the indictment for treason, to which he pleaded, "not guilty." As the trial, without great inconvenience, could not be held where the offense was alleged to have been committed, it was ordered that the Marshal of

the District summon a venire of forty-eight fit persons as jurors, twelve of whom were to be from Wood County. Owing to the fact that considerable time must elapse in carrying out this measure of the court, it was decided to postpone the trial until the third of August.

Before adjourning, it was ordered that Burr for safe keeping be taken from his improvised prison to the penitentiary which was located in a solitary place about one mile from the city. His new quarters consisted of a suite of three rooms in the third story, which were light and spacious but ill-ventilated and poorly furnished. Here his friends and acquaintances were allowed to see him without interruption. Burr always remembered the people of Richmond with gratitude for their considerate treatment, and the confidence they reposed in his honor when he might have easily escaped from their prisons if he had so chosen. The ladies who were always and everywhere his friends, were especially kind and solicitous of his welfare. Servants were continually arriving, bringing oranges, lemons, pineapples, raspberries, apricots, and more substantial articles, with accompanying notes, inquiries and condolences. On the whole his situation was far more agreeable than in the gaol. His jailer, too, was very civil and polite. "You would have

laughed," he wrote to Theodosia, "to have heard our compliments the first evening."

"I hope, sir," said the jailer, "it would not be disagreeable to you if I should lock this door after dark."

"By no means, sir; I should prefer it to keep out the intruders."

"It is our custom, sir," continued he, "to extinguish all lights at nine o'clock; I hope, sir, you will have no objection to that."

"That, sir, I am sorry to say is impossible," replied Burr, "for I never go to bed till twelve, and always burn two candles."

"Very well, sir," said the jailer, "just as you please. I should have been glad if it had been otherwise; but, as you please, sir."

Nearly six weeks went by with a steady increase in the prisoner's popularity. His winning grace and uniform cheerfulness under adverse circumstances won him the esteem of all with whom he came in contact in Richmond, but the country at large still remained as firm in its conviction of his guilt as ever. The thoroughness with which the President's proclamation, General Eaton's deposition, Wilkinson's revelations, and the yellow journals had done their work, was fully demonstrated when the court again convened, and an effort was made to secure a jury. All had expressed opinions

more or less unfavorable of the prisoner's guilt. One had said that he believed him to have been guilty of treason; another, that he was guilty of treasonable intentions, but doubted whether an overt act had been committed. A third confessed that he believed him guilty of the charges brought against him, and that he ought to be hanged. Still another confessed to having said that he would give five pounds for Colonel Burr's head, and emphasized his statement with an oath that he would do it yet. Of the first venire of forty-eight, but four were chosen, and all but one of these admitted his prejudice against the prisoner. Every man from Wood County was rejected. The difficulty of securing an impartial jury was by this time apparent to every one. Hay was in favor of summoning at least one hundred and fifty talesmen; were it not for the expense, he declared he would move for five hundred. The Court, however, only awarded a panel of forty-eight. In order to save time and avoid the disagreeable duty of making peremptory challenges, Burr proposed to select eight out of the whole venire. To this the Chief Justice and the opposing counsel offered no objection, and after considerable skirmishing that number was secured and added to the four already chosen. Some of those selected from the last venire openly avowed their prejudice, admitting that

they had time and again expressed opinions unfavorable to the prisoner. It was an unique proceeding for one to thus place his life and honor in the hands of a jury composed of men who made no effort to conceal their hostility. But Burr was compelled to accept them or allow his case to drag on indefinitely, and he made the best of it with such a fair show of candor and innocence that it must have impressed his friends, if not his enemies of its genuineness.

While the difficult task of selecting twelve good and true men to sit in judgment on Burr was going forward, additional interest was aroused by the arrival of Blennerhassett from Kentucky. He had been taken into custody at Lexington, on July 14th, while on his way from Natchez to his old home on the Ohio. No effort was made by him to evade the officers of the law; in fact, he expressed his willingness to voluntarily accompany the Deputy Marshal, David Meade, who with a guard of five men conducted him to Richmond on horseback, a distance of more than five hundred miles. On his arrival, dinner was served at the Washington Tavern, after which he was taken in a carriage to the penitentiary. He was assigned the apartments lately occupied by Burr, who for the convenience of his counsel had been removed to his "town house," where he remained under guard during his trial for treason. Be-

fore Blennerhassett was fairly settled in his new lodgings, a lively note arrived from Burr, asking what counsel he should send him. A present of sugar, tea, and cakes was received from Mrs. Alston, and a visit was also paid him by her husband and Edmund Randolph, the latter offering to defend him without pay. Mr. Botts, the next day, made a similar offer, and Mr. Wickham likewise tendered his services; all of which were gratefully accepted by Blennerhassett, who in view of the exigencies of his family had declared that he would not take a single dollar from them to defray the cost of his defense. On August 10th, he was brought into court, which was then occupied with the applications of jurors who wished to be excused from serving during the trial of Burr. In a little while Burr himself entered, and noticing Blennerhassett, walked over to where he was sitting; shook his hand, and smilingly observed that he was extremely glad to see him. Hay stated to the Court that it might be well at this time to arraign Blennerhassett; to which Mr. Botts objected, for want of preparation on the part of his counsel. Hay consented to his being remanded, and he was then taken back to prison by his attendants.

Fourteen days had been consumed in securing a jury. On August 17th, the trial began in earnest. William Marshall, the Clerk, addressed the jury in the

usual form. The prisoner stood up while the indictment was being read. The charge was solemn, but picturesque. It affirmed that Aaron Burr, a citizen and owing allegiance to the United States, but not having the fear of God before his eyes, nor weighing the duty of his said allegiance, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, on the tenth day of December, one thousand, eight hundred and six, assembled a multitude of persons to the number of thirty and upwards, armed with guns, swords, dirks, and other warlike weapons, at Blennerhassett's island in the County of Wood, and District of Virginia; that the said Aaron Burr with the said persons as aforesaid most wickedly, maliciously, and traitorously did ordain, prepare and levy war against the said United States; that he and the multitude mentioned did array themselves with guns and other weapons offensive and defensive, and did proceed, on the eleventh day of December, of the year aforesaid, from the said island down the river Ohio, with the wicked and traitorous intention to take possession by force of arms of the city of New Orleans, contrary to the duty of their said allegiance and fidelity.

The District Attorney opened the cause on the part of the government with a long speech, commenting on the definition of treason according to the Consti-

tution, which declares that "Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." He applied it to the case in hand; reciting the facts in connection, and assuming beyond question that the prisoner was guilty as charged.

The great crowd listened breathlessly, but there was an audible stir when Hay proceeded to call his witnesses. General Eaton was the first summoned to the stand, and necks were craned and ears strained to catch every word and movement, when Burr rose and objected to this order of examining witnesses. Eaton was presumed to be called to prove certain conversations, relating to treasonable intentions, said to have been held in Washington; no witness could testify until an overt act had been established. He was seconded by Botts, Wickham and Martin, the latter's argument exhibiting his remarkable familiarity with authorities and precedents. "On a trial for murder," argued he, "the act of killing must first be proved, if not admitted; in a prosecution for burglary, the nocturnal breaking into the house must be proved; in larceny, the taking and carrying away must be proved, and in a prosecution for robbery, it is necessary to prove the taking by force and violence from the person before any testimony can be admitted respecting the felonious inten-

tion. The true and rational order in all prosecutions is to show first that the principal act on which the charge depends has been committed."

Wirt contended that it had been the practice for the prosecutor to display the evidence in his own way; that the lucid and logical method was to unfold the facts as they occurred. "Would you begin to narrate a tale at the end of it? Or if you wrote a history of the late Revolution, would you begin at the siege of York?" Thus the day wore away, but on the following morning the prosecution realized that a serious inroad had been made upon their plan of campaign. The Chief Justice decided that Eaton's testimony was admissible so far as it related to levying war on Blennerhassett's island, to seize on New Orleans, or separate by force the Western from the Eastern States, but in respect to plans to be executed at the City of Washington, or other treasonable designs, it would not be considered relevant. Eaton was allowed to proceed, but before beginning his testimony stated that he knew nothing of any overt act which went to prove the prisoner guilty of treason.

"During the winter of 1805-'06," the witness began, "—I cannot be positive as to the distinct point of time; yet, during that winter—at the City of Washington, Aaron Burr signified to me that he was organizing a

military expedition to be moved against the Spanish provinces on the southwestern frontiers of the United States. . . . In case of my country's being involved in a war, I should have thought it my duty to obey so honorable a call as was proposed to me. Under impressions like these, I did engage to embark myself in the enterprise, and pledged myself to Colonel Burr's confidence. At several interviews, it appeared to be his intention to convince me by maps and other documents, of the feasibility of penetrating to Mexico. At length, from certain indistinct expressions and innuendoes, I admitted a suspicion that Colonel Burr had other projects. He used strong expressions of reproach against the administration of the government; accused them of want of character, want of energy, and want of gratitude. . . . I permitted him to believe myself resigned to his influence, that I might understand the extent and motive of his arrangements. Colonel Burr now laid open his project of revolutionizing the territory west of the Alleghany; establishing an independent empire there; New Orleans to be the capital, and he himself to be the chief; organizing a military force on the waters of the Mississippi, and carrying a conquest to Mexico. The witness also mentioned a central revolution for overthrowing the government at Washington, his testimony

relating only to conversations between him and Burr, being substantially a repetition of his published statement. In face of it all, he admitted that instead of notifying the authorities, he had shortly afterward called upon Jefferson, and urged him to appoint Burr to a foreign embassy—either Paris, London, or Madrid. He gave as a reason for his inconsistent action, that he feared to place his word in the balance against the weight of Burr's character, and that his appointment would remove a dangerous man from the country. He also stated in his examination in chief that he had suffered much from delays in adjusting his accounts for money advanced for the government while Consul at Tunis, and for the expense of supporting the war with Tripoli. In his cross examination, Martin brought out the fact that he had applied to Congress, but that no settlement was effected; that when he had again returned from Barbary eighteen months later, he had renewed his application, and that new difficulties had arisen; that leaving out the sums he had advanced, the government had a considerable balance against him; that while the matter was under discussion strictures derogatory to his character had been made on the floor of the House of Representatives. The account, however, had lately been settled.

“Mr. Martin,—What balance did you receive?”

"Answer, That is my concern, sir."

"Mr. Burr,—What was the balance against you?"

"Eaton (to the Court) Is that a proper question?"

"Mr. Burr,—My object is manifest; I wish to show the bias which has existed in the mind of the witness."

The Chief Justice saw no objection to the question.

"Eaton,—I cannot say to a cent or dollar, but I have received about ten thousand dollars."

"Mr. Burr,—When was the money received?"

"Answer,—About March last."

The significance of this reply lay in the fact that it was but a few weeks after he had given his deposition to the public. When he had been examined by the grand jury in June, he came out of the room in such rage and agitation that he shed tears, complaining that he had been questioned as if he were a villain. This time he left the stand utterly discredited.

The next witness called was Commodore Thomas Truxton. He testified that in July, 1806, Colonel Burr had told him that in the event of a war with Spain, he contemplated an expedition to Mexico; that after the expedition he intended to provide a formidable navy at the head of which he intended to place him; that he intended to establish an independent government, and give liberty to an enslaved world; that the Mexicans were ripe for revolt, and that the

expedition could not fail; that he had asked him the best mode of attacking Havana, Carthagena, and La Vera Cruz; that he had shown him the draft of a boat, and asked him whether in his opinion such vessels were calculated for the river Mississippi and its waters; that he intended them for the conveyance of agricultural products to market at New Orleans, and in the event of a war, for transports; that if he were disappointed as to the event of war, he was about to complete a contract for a large tract of land on the Washita; that he intended to invite his friends to settle it, and being on the frontier would be ready to move whenever a war should take place. "I asked him," said the Commodore, "if the Executive were privy to or concerned in the project?" He answered emphatically "that he was not," and on this account, the witness deposed that he had declined to take part.

"Colonel Burr,—Do you not recollect my telling you of the propriety of private expeditions, undertaken by individuals in case of war; and that there had been such in the late war, and that there was no legal restraint on such expeditions?" Hay objected to the question, but Burr insisted on its propriety.

"Commodore Truxton,—You said that Wilkinson, the army, and many officers of the navy would join, and you spoke highly of Lieutenant Jones."

"Burr,—Were we not on terms of intimacy? Was there any reserve on my part, in our frequent conversations; and did you ever hear me express any intention or sentiment respecting a division of the Union?"

"Answer,—We were very intimate. There seemed to be no reserve on your part. I never heard you speak of a division of the Union."

"Burr,—Did I not state to you that the Mexican expedition would be very beneficial to this country?"

"Answer,—You did."

"Burr, Had you any serious doubt as to my intention to settle those lands?"

"Answer,—So far from that, I was astounded at the intelligence of your having different views, contained in newspapers received from the Western country, after you went thither."

Hay, Wirt and MacRae all took a hand in the cross examination, but, to their evident discomfiture, failed to elicit anything new, and realizing too late their blunder in putting the sturdy Commodore on the stand.

Peter Taylor, Blennerhassett's gardener, was next sworn. He told a rambling story of his trip to Kentucky after Blennerhassett; of his conversations with his employer about collecting a body of good, orderly, young men with rifles to settle eight hundred thousand acres belonging to Colonel Burr. That they were

going to invade Mexico; that Colonel Burr would be king, and Mrs. Alston, his daughter, queen, when Colonel Burr died; that Colonel Burr had a great many friends in the Spanish territory; that no less than two thousand Roman Catholic priests were engaged; that the Spaniards, like the French, had got dissatisfied with their government, and would like to swap it. He had told Blennerhassett that the people had got it into their heads that he wanted to divide the Union, but his employer had said Colonel Burr and he could not do it themselves. All they could do was to tell the people the consequence of it.

On cross examination by Hay and MacRae, he told of the landing of Tyler's men; of his assisting them the night they departed by carrying brandy, candles and boxes.

"Mr. Wickham,—You saw General Tupper and Mr. Woodbridge that night?"

"Answer,—Yes."

"Question,—Was Colonel Burr there?"

"Answer,—No. I did not see him."

"Question,—Did you understand whether he was in that part of the country at that time?"

"Answer,—I understood, not. I never saw him on the Island." And with this remarkable admission, the redoubtable Peter stood aside.

On the following day Colonel George Morgan and his sons John and Thomas were examined. Their evidence tallying with the story related in a former chapter. It consisted in the main of Burr's alleged indiscreet strictures on the weakness of the government and wild predictions concerning the East and West. According to Colonel Morgan he had received no encouragement and had therefore revealed nothing.

Jacob Allbright, an ignorant Dutchman, was the next witness. He said he had been employed to build a kiln for drying corn on the Island; that when it was dried he had taken it to mill. He had been employed in that business four weeks. That Blennerhassett had told him they were going to settle a new country, and asked him to join them; that twenty or thirty men, some armed with rifles and some with shotguns had assembled at the Island in boats; one of these had told him they were going to take a silver mine from the Spanish. That on the night they departed he had assisted in carrying four or five trunks to the boats. He had not noticed any powder or bayonets, but had seen one of the boatmen running bullets in the kitchen. He wound up by relating an incredible story about a man by the name of Tupper attempting to arrest Blennerhassett, whereupon a number of the men leveled their muskets at him, who at this juncture

wished them a safe journey down the river. This tale was at variance with a deposition he had previously made and could not be corroborated by any other witnesses who were present, besides General Tupper, of Marietta, was in court but the prosecution by this time knew better than to put him on the stand.

A number of other witnesses were examined including William Love, employed as a groom by Blennerhassett, who gave an account of the embarkation from the Island. Dudley Woodbridge told about the contract for the boats at Marietta; of their building and seizure on the Muskingum, and of what he knew of Blennerhassett's participation in the enterprise. The testimony of Maurice Belknap, who remained at the mansion with Mr. Woodbridge on the night of the departure and Edmund Dana, of Belpre, who had crossed to the Island the same evening, closed the evidence of the prosecution relating to the overt act. A halt was now called, and the prosecution maneuvered to connect the transactions on the Island with extrinsic circumstances, in order to get Wilkinson on the stand. But they were promptly held up by the defense, who very justly contended that the prosecution having exhausted all the evidence relative to the transactions on Blennerhassett's Island without being able to prove an overt act, had no right at this point to introduce

extraneous testimony as to the intention or nature of the assemblage, and that they desired on their part to show the defects of the evidence submitted, and the futility of the prosecution.

The Chief Justice ruled that their point was well taken, whereupon there ensued the most remarkable contest of which the history of American jurisprudence can boast. The participants were masters of legal foil and fence, and the war was grimly waged, neither side granting nor receiving quarter. The resourceful Wickham was pitted against the sharp-tongued Mac-Rae; Hay, the zealous, strove with the accomplished Lee; while the eloquent Wirt clashed with sarcastic Botts. "The first proposition which I shall endeavor to establish in support of our motion," the latter broke in, "is, that the acts proved to have taken place on the island were not in themselves acts of war, and no intention could make them acts of war. A bare statement of the facts will prove this to be true.

"About thirty men went upon the island and remained for two or three days. They had some arms with ammunition. They watched their property at the boats. They prepared provisions for descending the river; and at a place contiguous to the island they killed some squirrels. As notable a circumstance as any in this overt act is that they had what one of the

witnesses calls a watchword. All but Blennerhassett and Tyler were confessedly ignorant of the plan. They got alarmed at the report of a mob and fled secretly in the night, after Tyler had declared his purpose not to resist the constituted authorities. It may be considered as proved, though only by one witness (Allbright) that they had six or seven guns, but his evidence is much to be suspected. As to their presenting guns at General Tupper, it ought not to be believed. If believed it was only an act of violence to a private individual, or at most it was but resistance to an officer. But Tupper was not in office. He was out of the State of Ohio; and the instant he left it his authority ended. It is conceded by the gentlemen, that violence to him, when thus without authority, could not be an act of a treasonable nature. Even if it had been in Ohio, it would have been war against Ohio only, if it were war at all, which is by no means admitted. The proposition on the other side is, that the acts which I have enumerated on Blennerhassett's island were overt acts of war. Those acts were intended first against the people of Wood County; or secondly, against New Orleans. First: It was, I will suppose, against Wood County. The boats, the oars, the provisions for a long journey, the after descent were circumstances calculated for overt acts of levying war

against Wood County! because these boats, oars, provisions and the descent were proper acts of war against the people of Wood County!"

"But, sir, the party was armed, and this shows that they were in expectation that the people of Wood County would attack them. I apprehend that the people of Wood County meditated war on the people of the island, not that the islanders meditated war against the militia of Wood. And accordingly we find that the people of the island fled silently in the night from those of Wood. And because they fled, it seems they were guilty of acts of war! But if the war were not against Wood County it was against New Orleans, which was only two thousand, two hundred miles distant."

After dealing more seriously with the opposition's definition of a treasonable assembly, he continued: "The brace of swearers from Wood County, Taylor and Allbright, are the leading witnesses for the prosecution. They are like Dogberry and Verges in Shakespeare's 'Much ado about Nothing,' a comedy which these two witnesses have been acting here. The constable, if I recollect rightly, was employed in securing malefactors: 'you will recollect, sir, which be thy malefactors.' Dogberry answered, 'marry, that am I and my partner.' The Dogberry from Wood County

might with great truth have answered in the same manner." After showing that Taylor's account in the main was ridiculous and incredible and that Allbright's understanding was no more to be depended upon than his integrity, he closed the argument for the day.

It was the contention of the defense that "no person could be convicted of treason who was not present when the act was committed. Burr was admitted to have been in Kentucky when the so-called recruits assembled on Blennerhassett's island, hence the question was sprung by Mr. Randolph "Whether, under the Constitution of the United States, a person who it is admitted who would be an accessory in felony, can be considered as a principal in treason in levying war?" Again, if such evidence of an accessory be admitted under the indictment, ought the real principal to be first convicted?

Here Wirt flung himself into the arena: "Will any man say that Blennerhassett was the principal, and Burr but an accessory? Who will believe that Burr, the author and projector of the plot, who raised the forces, who enlisted the men and who procured the funds for carrying it into execution, was made a cat's paw off? Will any man believe that Burr, who is a soldier bold, ardent, restless and aspiring, the great

actor whose brain conceived and whose hand brought the plot into operation, that he should sink down into an accessory, and that Blennerhassett should be elevated into a principal? He would startle at the thought. Aaron Burr, the contriver of the whole conspiracy, to everybody concerned in it was as the sun to the planets which surround him. Did he not bind them in their respective orbits and give them their light, their heat and their motion? Yet he is to be considered an accessory, and Blennerhassett is to be the principal!

Let us put the case between Burr and Blennerhassett. Let us compare the two men, and settle this question of precedence between them. It may save a good deal of troublesome ceremony hereafter.

Who Aaron Burr is we have seen in part already. I will add, that beginning his operations in New York, he associates with him men whose wealth is to supply the necessary funds. Possessed of the main-spring, his personal labor contrives all the machinery. Pervading the continent from New York to New Orleans, he draws into his plan, by every allurements which he can contrive, men of all ranks and descriptions. To youthful ardor he presents danger and glory; to ambition, rank and titles and honors; to avarice, the mines of Mexico. To each person whom he addresses

he presents the object adapted to his taste. His recruiting officers are appointed. Men are engaged throughout the continent. Civil life is indeed quiet upon its surface, but in its bosom this man has contrived to deposit the materials which, with the slightest touch of his match, produce an explosion to shake the continent. All this his restless ambition has contrived; and in the autumn of 1806, he goes forth for the last time to apply this match. On this occasion he meets with Blennerhassett.

Who is Blennerhassett? A native of Ireland, a man of letters, who fled from the storms of his own country to find quiet in ours. His history shows that war is not the natural element of his mind. If it had been, he never would have exchanged Ireland for America. So far is an army from furnishing the society natural and proper to Mr. Blennerhassett's character, that on his arrival in America, he retired even from the population of the Atlantic States, and sought quiet and solitude in the bosom of our western forests. But he carried with him taste and science and wealth; and lo! the desert smiled. Possessing himself of a beautiful island in the Ohio, he rears upon it a palace, and decorates it with every romantic embellishment of fancy. A shrubbery that Shenstone might have envied, blooms around him. Music that might have

charmed Calypso and her nymphs, is his. An extensive library spreads its treasures before him. A philosophical apparatus offers to him all the secrets and mysteries of nature. Peace, tranquility, and innocence shed their mingled delights around him. And to crown the enchantment of the scene, a wife who is said to be lovely even beyond her sex, and graced with every accomplishment that can render it irresistible, had blessed him with her love, and made him the father of several children. The evidence would convince you that this is but a faint picture of the real life. In the midst of all this peace, this innocent simplicity and this tranquility, this feast of mind, this pure banquet of the heart, the destroyer comes; he comes to change this paradise into a hell. Yet the flowers do not wither at his approach. No monitory shuddering through the bosom of their unfortunate possessor warns him of the ruin that is coming upon him. A stranger presents himself. Introduced to their civilities by the high rank which he had lately held in his country, he soon finds his way to their hearts, by the dignity and elegance of his demeanor, the light and beauty of his conversation, and the seductive and fascinating power of his address. The conquest was not difficult. Innocence is ever simple and credulous. Conscious of no design itself, it

suspects none in others. It wears no guard before its breast. Every door and portal and avenue of the heart is thrown open, and all who choose it enter. Such was the state of Eden when the serpent entered its bowers. The prisoner, in a more engaging form, winding himself into the open and unpracticed heart of the unfortunate Blennerhassett, found but little difficulty in changing the native character of that heart and the object of its affection. By degrees he infuses into it the poison of his own ambition. He breathes into it the fire of his own courage; a daring and desperate thirst for glory; an ardor panting for great enterprises, for all the storm and bustle and hurricane of life. In a short time the whole man is changed; and every object of his former delight is relinquished. No more he enjoys the tranquil scene; it has become flat and insipid to his taste. His books are abandoned. His retort and crucible are thrown aside. His shrubbery blooms and breathes its fragrance upon the air in vain; he likes it not. His ear no longer drinks the rich melody of music; it longs for the trumpet's clangor and the cannon's roar. Even the prattle of his babes, once so sweet, no longer affects him; and the angel smile of his wife, which hitherto touched his bosom with ecstasy so unspeakable, is now unseen and unfelt. Greater objects have taken possession of his soul. His

imagination has been dazzled by visions of diadems, of stars and garters and titles of nobility. He has been taught to burn with restless emulation at the names of great heroes and conquerors. His enchanted island is destined soon to relapse into a wilderness; and in a few months we find the beautiful and tender partner of his bosom whom he lately 'permitted not the winds of summer to visit too roughly,' shivering at midnight, on the winter banks of the Ohio, and mingling her tears with the torrents, that froze as they fell. Yet this unfortunate man, thus deluded from his interest and his happiness, thus seduced from the paths of innocence and peace, thus confounded in the toils that were deliberately spread for him, and overwhelmed by the mastering spirit and genius of another—this man, thus ruined and undone and made to play a subordinate part in this grand drama of guilt and treason, this man is to be called the principal offender, while he by whom he was thus plunged in misery is comparatively innocent, a mere accessory! Is this reason? Is it law? Is it humanity? Sir, neither the human heart nor the human understanding will bear a perversion so monstrous and so absurd! so shocking to the soul! so revolting to reason! Let Aaron Burr, then, not shrink from the high destination which he has courted, and having already ruined

Blennerhassett in fortune, character and happiness forever, let him not attempt to finish the tragedy by thrusting that ill-fated man between himself and punishment."

It was a great plea, and won Mr. Wirt historical renown, but it failed to down the opposition, who insistently clamored for the facts. Mr. Wickham observed that the eloquent gentleman used so many tropes, and scattered so many flowers that he reminded him of a Roman epigram on a lady who so was completely enveloped in decorations that she was the smallest part of herself.

It might be well to remember that at the very time Wirt was making his touching appeal to the jury, Blennerhassett had in his possession a letter from his wife, dated August 3rd, which proves his characterization was not altogether unjust. "Assure Colonel Burr," she wrote, "of my warmest acknowledgments for his and Mrs. Alston's kind remembrance, and tell him to assure her that she has inspired me with a warmth of attachment that never has, nor ever can diminish while I live. I wish him to urge her to write to me."

The conflict now raged more fiercely than ever. The law was searched for precedent and history for example; appeal was even made to holy writ. Old

England's musty tomes were ransacked for acts, indictments and cases during the reign of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and Stuarts. With these authorities, Luther Martin proved himself most familiar, and threw himself with all his legal erudition and stormy vehemence into the breach, with such bitterness and fury that none could withstand. "Another circumstance," he exclaimed, "has been offered to your consideration with a view of exciting the public indignation. Blennerhassett has been most piteously represented as a seduced person, and it is asked, what, shall the seducer be acquitted, and the seduced be the victim? And in order to make the representation more affecting, and to excite our sympathy to a higher degree, the gentleman has gravely introduced his lovely wife and prattling children, his hatred of war, his love of music, of literature and chemistry, his seduction by the arts of Mr. Burr.

"Sir, I believe that Blennerhassett is innocent. I know him to be innocent; and he may defy all the efforts to be made against him. But the situation in which he is placed does not reflect criminality on Colonel Burr. Do you examine into the character and conduct of the accessory in examining the principal, as to whether he were under the influence of the principal or not? Is this not an invitation to subvert all the

rules of the law? Blennerhassett is not to be examined; but he is to be called small in guilt, because that of Mr. Burr is to be magnified. This is done, not out of any cordiality to him, but in hatred of Burr. The question now, when he is tried as a principal, is, is he guilty or not? Did he commit the fact? Whereas, according to law, when an accessory before the fact is examined or tried, the only question is, did he abet or aid him who committed the act? and not whether he committed the act himself. This argument was not addressed to you, but those who surround this great tribunal." For fourteen hours, he rushed on like a mighty torrent sweeping everything in his course. Mr. Randolph closed the great contest with a masterly effort on Saturday evening, August 29th.

On the following Monday, the Chief Justice submitted a complete review of the case, which required nearly three hours for the reading. The closing paragraphs firmly established the main position so heroically contended for by the defense.

"The present indictment charges the prisoner with levying war against the United States, and alleges an overt act of levying war. That overt act must be proved, according to the mandates of the Constitution and of the act of Congress, by two witnesses. It is not proved by a single witness." Regarding the

principal and accessory, he reasoned that "The legal guilt of the accessory depends on the guilt of the principal; and the guilt of the principal can only be established in a prosecution against himself," and that "No person indicted as a principal can be expected to say I am not a principal. I am an accessory. I did not commit, I only advised the act." As to extrinsic testimony, he held that "No testimony relative to the conduct or declarations of the prisoner elsewhere and subsequent to the transaction on Blennerhassett's island can be admitted; because such testimony, being in its nature merely corroborative and incompetent to prove the overt act in itself, is irrelevant until there be proof of the over act by two witnesses." He closed with the words: "The jury have now heard the opinion of the court on the law of the case. They will apply that law to the facts, and will find a verdict of guilty or not guilty as their own consciences may direct."

On motion of Mr. Hay the court was adjourned until Tuesday morning, when the jury retired. In a short time they returned, and amid a breathless silence their foreman, Colonel Carrington, read the following verdict: "We of the jury say that Aaron Burr is not proved to be guilty under this indictment by any evidence submitted to us. We therefore find him not guilty."

No sooner had the foreman ceased reading than Burr was on his feet objecting to the verdict as unusual and irregular, and demanding that it be rendered in the regular form. The Chief Justice observed that the verdict was in effect the same as a verdict of acquittal; that if the jury wished it, it might stand on the bill as it was, but that an entry should be made on the record of "not guilty." He thanked the jury for their patient attention during the long trial, and then discharged them.

The next day, Burr was released from prison on bail, and measures were instituted against him on the charge of misdemeanor. One week was taken up with the preliminary proceedings, at the end of which a jury was impaneled and the trial went forward. The indictment consisted of seven counts. In all of them the offense was charged to have been committed on Blennerhassett's island. The proceedings had but fairly begun when a ruling of the Chief Justice excluded most of the District Attorney's testimony, and he moved that the jury be discharged. To this Burr objected and demanded a verdict. The court ruled that in this stage of the case that body could not be discharged without mutual consent. The jury then retired and soon after returned with a verdict of "not guilty."

The government forces now rallied for a last stand. On September 16th, Hay preferred a charge of treason against Aaron Burr, Harman Blennerhassett and Israel Smith in levying war against the United States, specifying an island at the mouth of the Cumberland River and Bayou Pierre on the Mississippi River as places where overt acts were committed. Much time was consumed in the examination of witnesses and the discussion of the attorneys, but little if any additional light was thrown upon the transactions involved. General Wilkinson was allowed to tell his story. Under the fire of cross examination, he acknowledged that he had made certain alterations in the cipher-letter received from Burr, by erasures, etc., and then swore it to be a true copy. So much for the star witness of whose evidence Wirt had eloquently declared, "was the keystone of the arch of all the testimony they possessed."

On October 20th, nearly seven months from the time he first took his seat in Richmond, the Chief Justice delivered his final opinion committing "Aaron Burr and Harman Blennerhassett for preparing and providing the means for a military expedition against the territories of a foreign prince, with whom the United States were at peace. If those whose province and duty it is to prosecute offenders against the laws

of the United States shall be of opinion that a crime of a deeper dye has been committed, it is at their choice to act in conformity with that opinion."

Hay to cover his confusion moved for the commitment of the accused to the State of Ohio, which was ordered. Burr and Blennerhassett were admitted to bail for their appearance, in the sum of three thousand dollars each, but the prosecution was never pressed. The great trial was ended, and they were once more free from the toils of the law, but not from the ban of suspicion. Blennerhassett's fortune was wrecked, and Burr's influence broken, never to be retrieved.

CHAPTER XVII

DISILLUSIONED

DURING the trial of Burr for treason, Blennerhassett had chiefly employed his time in preparing a brief of his own case. He also kept a daily record of the proceedings in progress, which was amplified by characteristic sketches of persons and events connected with the trial and various phases of the expedition. This diary, kept for the gratification of Mrs. Blennerhassett, and afterward forwarded to her with instructions to be kept under lock and key when not in her hands, affords a better idea of the character of its author than all his biographers have ever written. His knowledge of law and literature, science and language is very much in evidence. There is also some show of business; but his lack of practical talent and energy is everywhere apparent.

He seemed dazed by the deluge of protested notes he had indorsed for Burr. Bankruptcy stared him in the face, like some horrible nightmare. Instead of his near-sighted vision of diadems, courts, and royal processions, he beheld only the dreary prospect of his

prison walls. In place of honors and emoluments, he saw his fortune scattered to the winds; his hopes, false and fleeting, all vanished with the quest that had given them birth. It was a rude awakening; this certainty of what he had more than half suspected and feared full nine months before. Word came to him from Marietta that a writ had been served on Dudley Woodbridge, attaching all the claims he held against him; that Barker had recovered several hundred dollars for work on the unfinished boats; that Buell, acting under the direction of the government, had gone on to sell the pork and meal stored at Marietta, and that the boats were being fitted out to take the United States troops to St. Louis; that all his movable property on the Island had been levied on by his creditors; that the Neals and Phelps had recovered their claims by the sale of the greater part of his personal property; that his negroes had left Virginia and were strolling about on the Ohio side. On top of this, a letter was received from Jos. F. Lewis, his agent at Philadelphia, stating that their house had been obliged to dishonor his drafts lately drawn, in consequence of attachments on his funds still left in their hands. Added to these reverses were his cares on account of the government prosecutions and the discomfiture of imprisonment.

His situation was truly painful, if not perilous.

Accustomed to the freedom of the Island; its pleasant scenes and river breezes, the bare walls of the penitentiary seemed cheerless beyond description. The high windows prevented the free admission of air, and the oppressive heat of dog-days was almost stifling. His visitors complained of the closeness of his quarters, and he endeavored to remove the noisome miasma by employing his knowledge of certain chemicals procured from the city druggist. Sometimes he tried to keep cool by walking and fanning himself till he would sink down on the floor exhausted. Again he would stand upon a chair to breathe in the air that came through the gratings overhead. He suffered from racking headache and general lassitude of the body. But this was nothing compared to his distress of mind. He brooded over his troubles until he grew sick at heart. For himself he manifested small concern; his only anxiety was for his distressed family down on the Mississippi. He yearned for the companionship of his wife and boys, and especially for her helpful counsel and encouragement. He dreamed that he had lost little Harman, and his apprehension was increased when he received a letter from Mrs. Blennerhassett informing him that both boys had fever. Although she endeavored to hide it from him, he knew from what she said that her own indisposition

had been aggravated by what she had suffered. Yet under it all she wrote him long and cheering letters, endeavoring as best she could to animate his drooping spirits. Her letters had for the time the effect of relieving his brooding care, but he again would drift into a dull apathetic state from which it was only with difficulty he could rouse himself. Sometimes he would be filled with a feeling of resentment against all concerned with his misfortunes; some of whom, it is true, he had no just cause to blame. He considered that he had been duped by Burr, not, perhaps, as to the object but the financing of the expedition, and from this time forward there are evidences of an ever-widening breach between them. He had been led to believe that Burr had funds, or at least friends pledged to him to warrant his drafts. This view was upheld by Alston's enthusiastic support, who declared his willingness to further the plans of his father-in-law to the extent of his entire fortune. During the conference at Lexington, he had given Blennerhassett a letter of guarantee indemnifying him against certain losses that might be incurred by his indorsement for Burr. Blennerhassett held that because of his verbal statements he was also responsible for other demands beyond the limit of his guarantee. He had already paid one bill of \$2,000, and assured Blennerhassett that

he was willing to assist him so far as it was within his power. He could not then spare any slaves from his estate, and it was impossible to raise money either by the sale or mortgage of lands in South Carolina, but Blennerhassett, fearing he would return home before the matter was settled with his Lexington creditors, ceased not to importune him until the claims held by Lewis Sanders amounting to \$10,000 and Lockett's bill of \$2,500 had been transferred to Alston's own account. Robert Miller's claim of \$4,000 against the Island was not transferred. Besides this indorsement held by Miller, Blennerhassett's account showed an additional balance against Burr of about \$3,000. Alston and his wife had taken their departure, and there was no show of Burr's reimbursing him during the trial as he was not only without means, but had civil suits pending against him which amounted at the close of the trial to more than \$30,000. So he decided to wait until they were discharged, and if Alston did not settle the remaining losses he had incurred, he would accompany Burr to Philadelphia. Here the latter hoped to conclude some financial arrangement with George Pollock, with whose education he had had some concern, and who was reported to be very rich.

After fifty-three days' captivity the treason charge against Blennerhassett was dropped, and he along

with Burr was released on bail during their trial for misdemeanor, as already noted. His existence now became more endurable. Lodgings were secured convenient to the court, where his attendance demanded most of his time. Advantage was taken of its intermissions to call on acquaintances he had made while in Richmond in the spring of 1800, and others who had shown him favors while in prison. Among these were the Carringtons, Gambles, and Chevaliers, the last who were particularly solicitous of his welfare; the French Consul making him a temporary loan of \$1,000. His Irish countrymen were not less forward in coming to his aid. James O'Henesy, who rode one hundred miles to see him, Pat Hedren, a lawyer in easy circumstances, and Pierce Butler of Philadelphia were among those who tendered him substantial assistance.

The trial for misdemeanor having run its course, he set out in company with Luther Martin and Dr. John Cummins in a stage-coach for Washington, October 25th. While in the capital he called upon the Attorney General to see if he could not be released from his recognizance requiring his attendance at Chillicothe, but Rodney would not grant his request. They arrived at Baltimore November 1st, and at this place were overtaken by Burr. Their presence occasioned no small excitement, and the following day

they were serenaded by a city regiment commanded by one Frely, who drew his men under their window and played the "Rogue's March." The agitation grew apace, and on the third day hand-bills were distributed announcing that four choice spirits—initials and characterizations being given—(Chief Justice Marshall, Luther Martin, Blennerhassett, and Burr) would be martialled for execution by the hangman on Gallows Hill. It was feared that mob violence would ensue, and Burr, averse to encountering the rabble, took hasty leave for Philadelphia, being escorted with Swartwout to the stage-office by a guard sent them by the Mayor.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, Blennerhassett who had been warned by friends to keep inside sent word to Martin to come to him and share his fate. The messenger returned with the intelligence that Martin could not be seen, and that his friends and students were armed to repel an assault on his house; that the people were out in force prepared for "tarring and feathering." Blennerhassett was advised to ascend to the garret. From this he made his way through a trap-door to the roof. From his lofty station he could hear the uproar and witness the procession, numbering about fifteen hundred, led by fife and drum, and drawing two carts on which were mounted the

effigies of the "four worthies" mentioned for execution. They contented themselves while passing Martin's house on Charles Street with menaces and abuse, being held in check by two troops of cavalry who patrolled the street to prevent an outbreak. Martin did not make his appearance till next morning, when Blennerhassett took leave of him and set out for Philadelphia by packet, reaching that city November 5th.

Some weeks were taken up with his affairs here. As usual he lost time with Burr who seemed much occupied, and at last announced that he was financially aground on account of being compelled to give bail because of Lockett's demand to the amount of \$16,000. Blennerhassett was mortified to learn of this new embarrassment, and hastened to press his claim for Miller's draft of \$4,000 for which he said his property on the Ohio had been sacrificed to four times that amount.

Burr protested, declaring there was no one on whom he could call for assistance. But Blennerhassett insisted that he had accommodated others; that while he was willing himself to starve, he intended to make an effort to secure something for his family's subsistence. It was their last interview, and they parted with the feeling that the intercourse so long existing between them had been broken, and that their ways in the future lay far apart.

CHAPTER XVIII

THEODOSIA

IN the drama of life, it is not always he who takes a leading part that profits most or suffers most from the consequences of his own acts. Luther Martin in his great speech during the trial paused to pay a touching tribute to Theodosia, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Aaron Burr, deploring how deeply she was wounded by the envenomed shafts of hatred and malice aimed at the heart of her father. "There is nothing in human history more touching," declares another, "than the hurried letters, blotted with tears, in which she announced her daily progress to Richmond, for she was too weak to travel with the rapidity of the mail. Even the character of Burr borrows a momentary hallow from hers when we peruse his replies, in which, forgetting his peril and relaxing the stern front he assumed toward his enemies, he labored to quiet her fears and inspire her with confidence in his acquittal."

So remarkable was the bond of affection that united these two; so exquisite the father's fervor; so touching the daughter's devotion; so deep and unchanging her



Theodosia.

love in his severest hour of trial; so intimately was her fate interwoven with the tragic events of this story, that more than merely a passing notice is due her memory. In Theodosia Burr were blended all the finer strains of her father's nature with the womanly graces and captivating charm of her mother. She was a beautiful and precocious child—winsome, plump and rosy—endowed with just such mental qualities and characteristic tendencies that a man like Burr would take pride in developing and moulding into an ideal that he might fall down and adore.

"If I could foresee," he writes his wife, "that Theo would become a mere fashionable woman, with all the attendant frivolity and vacuity of mind, adorned with whatever grace and allurements, I would earnestly pray God to take her forthwith hence. But I yet hope, by her, to convince the world what neither sex appear to believe—that women have souls." With this high aim in view, he devised for her a system of education, which for breadth and liberal culture stands out in marked contrast to the narrow attainments of the best women of that day, who though often accomplished were rarely well informed, and whose virtues at best were limited to their domestic duties and social requirements. At eight, she was studying music, French and Latin; at ten, beginning Greek, and trans-

lating such authors as Virgil, Terence, and Lucian a year later. Besides these, she kept up her work in the more practical subjects of arithmetic, geography, and English. Her father although away from home and engrossed with his arduous legal and official duties, meanwhile, carefully superintended her studies in their minutest details, critically but kindly awarding praise or censure according to her effort. He had inherited the educational instincts of his distinguished ancestors, and in carrying out his designs anticipated by a century the modern method of giving instruction by correspondence. Her style of composition, her penmanship, which he characterizes as "very good," "very bad," and "middling," her punctuation and spelling were all given attention.

"You write acurate for accurate; laudnum for laudanum; intirely for entirely. This last word, indeed, is spelled both ways, but entirely is the most used and the most proper. Continue to use all these words in your next letter, that I may see that you know the true spelling. And tell me what is laudanum? Where and how made? and what are its effects? Never use a word which does not fully express your thoughts, or which for any other reason does not please you."

"It was what she had long wished for, and was at a loss how to procure it."

"Don't you see that this sentence would have been perfect and much more elegant without the last it?"

"Learn the difference between then and than. You will soon perceive it by translating them into Latin. Let me see how handsomely you can subscribe your name to your next letter, about this size."

"You have used with propriety the words 'encomium' and 'adopted.' I hope you may have frequent occasion for the former, with the like application. 'Cannot be committed to paper,' is well expressed."

He manifested constant solicitude for her health. Skating and horseback riding were included in her outdoor exercises. She was advised to sit erect or she would stint her growth and go into decline; "then farewell papa; farewell pleasure; farewell life."

As she grew older, he saw in her the fulfillment of his fondest hopes and aspirations. "Every hour of your day is interesting to me. I would give, what would I not give to see or know even your most trifling actions and amusements? This, however, is more than I can ask or expect. But I do expect with impatience your journal. Ten minutes every evening I demand; if you should choose to make it twenty, I shall be the better pleased." Strange to say, this lover-like interest and tenderness with which he regarded her in girlhood was continued to her dying day. Nor

was her moral culture neglected. He labored continually to develop her determination and perseverance, his instruction often showing traces of his own philosophy of life. "Receive with calmness every reproof; whether just or unjust. Consider within yourself whether there has been no cause for it. If it has been groundless and unjust, nevertheless bear it with composure and even with complacency. We must bear these things; and, let me tell you, that you will always feel much better for having borne with serenity the spleen of any one, than if you had returned spleen for spleen."

Mrs. Burr's health which had been gradually declining, finally became a source of serious apprehension; her troubles culminating in a cancer of a very malignant type. Her husband sought the aid of the most eminent physicians in the country, but without avail. She lingered on in untold anguish till the spring of 1794, when death relieved her sufferings. Burr declared with almost his last breath that she was the best woman and finest lady he had ever known.

Little Theo, now eleven years old, became the mistress of Richmond Hill; and right well she performed her duty for one so young. At the age of fourteen, her rule over her father's household was absolute. Richmond Hill in that day is said to have

been one of the finest country-seats on Manhattan Island. The historic old house with its pillared porticoes, surrounded by garden, grove and farm, that reached down to the Hudson, commanded an extensive view of the Jersey shore. Its guests were numerous and notable, including learned judges and statesmen, doctors of divinity and medicine, and such foreign notables as Talleyrand, Volney, and Louis Philippe, later King of France. In these distinguished circles, Theodosia moved like a queen; often presiding as hostess with the most charming grace and dignity.

When but seventeen, she was wooed and won by Joseph Alston, a young man of family and fortune of South Carolina. He was an ardent and accomplished suitor, and his defense of early marriages, in which he plead his cause in reply to her quotation from Aristotle, that a man should not marry before he is six-and-thirty, is decidedly ingenious and interesting. He argued that objections in such cases could only arise from want of discretion, or want of fortune in the contracting parties; that the age of discretion is wholly uncertain some men reaching it at twenty, others at thirty, and many not at all; that to fix such or such a period for marrying is ridiculous; that even the want of fortune is to be considered differently, according to where the marriage is to take place; in some

places a fortune is absolutely necessary to a man before he marries, whereas in others he marries expressly for the purpose of making a fortune. "Suppose a young man nearly twenty-two, already of the greatest discretion, with an ample fortune, were to be passionately in love with a young lady almost eighteen, equally discreet with himself, and who had a 'sincere friendship' for him, do you think it would be necessary to make him wait until thirty? particularly where the friends on both sides were pleased with the match."

He had already been admitted to the bar, and that he won his first case appears from one of Theodosia's letters written a fortnight later: "We leave this for Albany on the 26th inst. and shall remain there till 10th February. My movements after that will depend upon my father and—you. I had intended not to marry this twelvemonth, and in that case thought it wrong to divert you from your present engagements in Carolina; but to your solicitations I yield my judgment."

They were married at Albany, her birthplace, during the great contest between Jefferson and Burr for the presidency in 1801; and on their way to the "Oaks," their southern home, halted in Washington to witness the inauguration ceremonies. Probably no more beautiful, accomplished, or happier bride ever visited

the capital than Theodosia Burr Alston. Wealth, position, influence, were all hers. Her father bid fair to succeed Jefferson as President, while her husband did become the governor of his own state. Theodosia was as popular in South Carolina as in New York; but it is not as a leader of society in two states, or as mistress of the home of Joseph Alston that she is best known, but as the beloved daughter of Aaron Burr. Even after her marriage he seemed to have retained the first place in her affections. Her trust in him was absolute. He still directed her studies as when a child. "You and your concerns," he writes, "are the highest and dearest interests I have in the world; in comparison with which all others are insignificant."

Her only child was named after him. He was a bright and courageous boy, the idol of his parents and the hope of his proud grandfather, who never tired of relating the accounts of his little exploits. While at play one day when only three or four years old, he was attacked by a great ram that had been grazing near. Instead of attempting to run away he lifted the stick he carried and with all his might brought it down on his lordship's head with such a resounding whack that the astonished beast took to undignified flight to the immense delight of his parents, who at a short distance chanced to witness the combat. His bravery

greatly endeared him to his grandfather by whom he was called "Gampy," that being the child's first effort to pronounce the word grandpa. This he sometimes varied to Gampillus, Gampillo, or more often Gamp.

Notwithstanding the long and tedious journey to New York, frequent visits were made to Richmond Hill. The returning of the Vice-President's daughter from the South was always an occasion for fashionable feasting and feting. But this tide of happy years was rudely interrupted by the flood that set in from the fated shores of Hoboken. It was inevitable that Theodosia should in some measure share the opprobrium that so persistently followed in the footsteps of her father. She proudly faced the frowns and accusations of his enemies, and when the clouds gathered dark and lowering about Richmond, she fled to his side where she remained until his acquittal of the charge of treason. At different stages on that journey she received bracing letters from him which were intended to reassure her. "Remember," he wrote, "no agitations, no complaints, no fears or anxieties on the road or I renounce thee." And again: "I am informed that some good-natured people here have provided you a house and furnished it, a few steps from my town-house, whither I shall remove on Sunday; but I will

not, if I can possibly avoid it, move before your arrival, having a great desire to receive you all in this mansion (penitentiary). Pray, therefore, drive directly out here. You may get admission at any time from four in the morning till ten at night. Write me by mail from Petersburg that I may know of your approach."

During the trying months which followed, her devotion did not falter. Her tender regard for her father won the hearts of his friends and the admiration of his enemies, and prison halls were transformed into banqueting places. Amid the closing scenes, Theodosia wrote to a friend of her stay in Richmond as follows:

"I have this moment received a message from court, announcing to me that the jury has brought in a verdict of acquittal, and I hasten to inform you of it, my dear, to allay the anxiety which, with even more than your usual sweetness, you have expressed in your letter of the 22nd of July. It afflicts me, indeed, to think you should have suffered so much from sympathy with the imagined state of my feelings—for the knowledge of my father's innocence, my ineffable contempt for his enemies, and the elevation of his mind, have kept me above any sensations bordering on depression. Indeed, my father, so far from accepting of sympathy,

has continually animated all around him. It was common to see his desponding friends filled with alarm at some new occurrence, terrified at some new appearance of danger, fly to him in search of encouragement and support, and laughed out of their fears by the subject of them. This I have witnessed every day, and it almost persuaded me that he possessed the secret of repelling danger as well as apprehension. Since my residence here, of which some days and a night were passed in the penitentiary, our little family circle has been a scene of uninterrupted gaiety."

She received the unremitting sympathy and most delicate attention from the first inhabitants of Richmond. Maria, the accomplished daughter of Luther Martin, afterward eminent as Mrs. Richard Raynal Keene was her constant companion. The best that a city famous for its beautiful women, fast horses, and unrivaled hospitality, was at her command. John Barney, ex-member of Congress from Maryland, thus describes a reception held by Burr in the Martin house surrounded by his patrol of armed guards: "The dinner was superb, abounding in all the luxuries which Virginia's generous soil yields in lavish abundance. Twenty ladies and gentlemen of rank, fortune, and fashion graced the festive board."

"I felt pride and took pleasure in being permitted to

become his amanuensis. Each day as I rode along the streets my curricie was freighted with cake, confectionery, flowers redolent with perfume wreathed into fancy bouquets of endless variety."

Burr emerged from the trial a bankrupt in fame and fortune, but as gay and irrepressible as ever. During its closing scenes he was busied in his project of revolutionising Mexico. As early as October 8th he informed Blennerhassett that he was preparing to go to England; that the time was auspicious for him, and asked Blennerhassett to give him letters to his friends abroad. During the winter and spring of the following year he hovered about the cities of the East; all the while maintaining a strict incognito on account of the malevolence of his enemies. In April, he proceeded to New York, where he was joined by Theodosia who had come on from the South in anticipation of her father's departure. Believing that a temporary absence would tend to allay the personal and political prejudice manifested against him, and that he might find means to rehabilitate his favorite scheme, he embarked June 7th, under the assumed name of G. H. Edwards, on board the British packet "Clarissa," bound by way of Halifax for Liverpool.

Only occasional interviews were had with Theodosia before sailing, and these by the assistance of friends

or stolen under cover of darkness. Their last meeting was on the eve of his embarkation, and he had tenderly endeavored to prepare her for the trying ordeal: "It does not appear to me that we can conveniently meet this evening, but certainly one whole night before separation. Make haste in the meantime to gather strength for the occasion. Your efforts on the late occasion were wonderful. God grant that they may not have wholly exhausted you."

The dreaded night arrived. The final words of love and cheer were spoken, and the father, snatching one last, fond kiss from his daughter's lips, tore himself from her arms, and hurried away to the boat in waiting. It was indeed the last. They never met again.

At Halifax he received a passport and letters from George Prevost to his friends in England, who were related to Burr's wife and Theodosia. On July 13th, he landed at Falmouth, and three days later arrived in London.

He had hoped to interest the British Cabinet or the Emperor of France in his Mexican affairs, but he found Europe in the turmoils of war, and the situation in England inimical to all his plans. The British nation favored the Spaniards in their opposition to Napoleon, and was therefore opposed to the separation of her American colonies from Spain. But Burr was

not the man to yield without an effort. He held a number of interviews with Lord Castleragh, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Melville, and others; but insuperable obstacles were in the way, and nothing came of them, and he notified Theodosia that the matter had been abandoned.

"This certainly was inevitable," she replied, "but I cannot part with what has so long lain near my heart, and not feel some regret, some sorrow. No doubt there are many other roads to happiness but this appeared so perfectly suitable, so complete a remuneration for all the past; it so entirely coincided with my wishes relative to you, that I cherished it as my comfort even when illness scarcely allowed me any hope of witnessing its completion."

For a year and a half, she had been suffering from a distressing malady which had been aggravated by the inhospitable climate of the low rice lands of Carolina, and the trials she had undergone on her father's account. "Oh my guardian angel," she writes piteously, "why were you obliged to abandon me when enfeebled nature doubly required your care? Alas! Alas! How often have I deplored the want of your counsel and tenderness! How often when my tongue and hands trembled with disease, have I besought Heaven either to unite us or let me die at once! Yet

do not hence imagine that I yield to infantine lamentations or impatience. As soon as relief from pain restored me in some measure to myself, I became more worthy the happiness of being your daughter."

Added to the melancholy state of her health was the numbing neglect of professed friends of the family. "The world begins to cool terribly around me," again she writes, "You would be surprised how many I supposed attached to me have abandoned the sorry, losing game of disinterested friendship."

Acting upon her father's advice she spent two months at a health resort not far from New York, but returned no better than when she left. Her condition filled him with gloomy apprehensions. He consulted the most celebrated physicians in London, whom he asserted were the best in the world, and acting under their advice a voyage for Theodosia to England, and a trial of their skill was determined upon. He next transferred to her the slender sum in America destined for his own expenses, and notified her husband who was still in the South, that the course proposed was as he thought the only chance of saving her life. Winter was now at hand and pecuniary difficulties were encountered. The times were troubled. The "Hopedwell," which bore his letters was taken three days after sailing, and carried into France. Copies,

however, reached Theodosia by another packet.

Contrary to all expectations, her health improved so rapidly after cold weather set in, that she declared there was no pretext for the proposed voyage. Her father, ignorant of her recovery, continued till spring came to forward her letters insisting on her attempting the trip to England as he was sure the sea voyage, the medicinal aid, and the climate of that country would completely restore her to health;—when, suddenly, he was compelled to give all his attention to his own affairs. On the night of April 14th, a warrant was served on him, and, with his effects, he was hurried away to the Alien Office, where he was informed that his presence in Great Britain was embarrassing to his Majesty's government, and that it was the wish and expectation that he would remove elsewhere.

His assumed name, his mysterious movements, his reputed talent for intrigue were in those critical times sufficient grounds for British suspicion, but Burr gave his political enemies in America the credit for his expulsion from the country, and subsequent events go to show that he had good grounds for his belief. As it was not considered safe to enter any country under the control of France, and having a desire to visit Sweden, a passport was secured from Baron de Brinkman, the resident minister of that country. On April

26, 1809, he embarked for Gottenburg, where he landed May 3rd, and from there proceeded to Stockholm.

It would be interesting, did time and space permit, to follow Burr in his wanderings over Europe; to consider his interviews with Jeremy Bentham, jurist and philosopher, with whom he made his home while in London; to speak of his entree into the fashionable society of the British capital, his meeting with Charles Lamb, his visit to the tomb of Shakespeare; his journey to Edinburg, where he spent a month in a ceaseless round of dinners, balls, and assemblies; of his intimacy with Scott and Macenzie, from both of whom he received civilities and hospitalities; of his five months' stay in Sweden, where he was everywhere received as a distinguished guest, traveling twelve hundred miles, seeing everything, being received at court, visiting the reputed tomb of Hamlet, on the terrace back of the castle at Elsinore; admiring the fine climate, the good roads, the honesty and hospitality of the inhabitants, and above all their admirable system of jurisprudence, of which he made a careful study; of his excursion into Germany, going from Hamburg by way of Wiemar to Frankfort, and visiting Brunswick, Cassel Gotha, and other places en route of his intimacy with Professor Herren of Gottenburg, of whom he learned that the emperor had assented to the inde-

pendence of Mexico and the other Spanish colonies; of his acquaintance with Goethe, Weiland, and the Baroness De Stein; of his gracious reception at the palace of le Duc Regnant; his strange infatuation for la belle De Reitzenstein, a lady of the court circle of Wiemar; his realization that his stay here meant the abandonment of his most cherished hopes and projects, and his precipitate flight; his varied experiences at the refined courts of Gotha and Frankfort-on-the-Main; of his enforced stay of seventeen months in Paris, where he was under constant surveillance; of his incessant efforts to obtain a passport to the United States; his shabby treatment by Americans, and the malevolence of their government's agents; of his fruitless exertions to interest the French court in his Mexican schemes; his extreme poverty; his efforts to improve his finances, and the pitiful shifts he made to keep soul and body together; of his cheerfulness under all misfortunes; his finally getting away in the American ship, "Vigilant," bound for Boston, which was captured by a British frigate and sent into Yarmouth harbor; of his unexpected appearance and impecunious existence in London; his detention by the American consuls at Yarmouth and London; his humiliating expedients in securing passage on the "Aurora"; his struggle with wind and tide in an open boat for

twenty-seven miles to catch the outgoing ship.

The whole story reads like a romance; all its various incidents, anecdotes, and characterizations being carefully preserved in the journal which he kept from day to day for Theodosia. His brief, he called it, from which he promised he would make her and Gampillo many and many a speech when he returned. It was in a way to compensate for the interruption of their correspondence which both so bitterly deplored. For a year and a half he did not hear from her, and for full twelve months, she received not a line from him. One packet of Theodosia's letters was twenty-three months on the way, and yet she and Gamp and her father had continued to write as they had opportunity. But this was all over now. Aaron Burr was going back to America—back to Theodosia and little Gamp. How his heart warmed at the prospect. On September 11th, the day after he left Amsterdam, as the *Vigilant* lay at the entrance of the Zuyder Zee, he wrote, "My windows look out over the ocean which separates me from all that is dear. With what pleasure did I greet it after three years' absence. I am never weary of looking at it. There seems to be no obstacle between us and I almost fancy I see you and Gampy, with the sheep about the door."

He forgot that he had Great Britian to reckon with,

and that even then four of her ships were in full sight not two leagues away. The Vigilant, as we have seen, was taken, and nearly eight months elapsed before the Aurora, on which he last sailed, cast anchor in Boston harbor. At four in the morning, land was sighted; at seven, Boston lighthouse appeared. A pilot boat hove in view and all was bustle and joy except the grave and silent gentleman who had registered under the name of Adolphus Arnot. Why should not he rejoice?

The day waned. Night came on. A terrible storm raged on sea and land. Not a soul save the strange passenger remained aboard the ship, who in the lone cabin smoked his pipe, eagerly scanned the newspapers brought on board, wrote letters, and mused on what the morrow would bring forth: Would he be permitted to go his way unmolested? Perhaps the country which had once delighted to honor him, and which he had been so anxious to revisit would reject him with horror? Such was the home-coming of Aaron Burr.

Madison now reigned in Jefferson's stead, but he, too, had imbibed the general aversion to this "man without a country." Judging from the action of the government's agents in every part of Europe, he had naught to expect but the most implacable malice. Besides the government's prosecutions which, like the sword of Damocles, still hung over his head, his

own private debts were a source of constant solicitude. Two of his New York creditors held executions against him, and a debtor's prison stood in waiting should he make his appearance in that city. There were breakers ahead but for himself he felt no fear. He felt able to meet and overcome them all. His only real anxiety was for Theodosia and her boy. Theodosia, who had borne all, suffered all, braved all for his sake; who had comforted him with the assurance that she had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man; who had appealed to Mrs. Madison, wife of the President, whom she had known in happier days, to use her influence with the President for the removal of the prosecutions against her father; who determined to leave nothing undone which offered the faintest hope of clemency, addressed a letter to Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, inquiring whether her father would be safe from prosecution should he venture to return to this country. During all the years of exile, she had kept unwearied watch for the least sign of executive lenity, and with her heart sore with doubt and long-time waiting, she at last implored him to face the storm: "Go to New York—make your stand there"—then with the supreme resignation of another Jeanne D'Arc, she declares, "If the worst comes, I will leave everything to suffer with you." To New

York, then, he would go. There, he would set about to make money in every honorable way, but for the sake of those he loved better than life he would move cautiously.

The next morning, disguised by a large, old-fashioned wig, odd-looking garments, and lately cultivated whiskers, he went ashore, and secured lodgings at an obscure boarding-house. During the day he managed to get his baggage through the custom-house without being detected; passing right under the nose of Dearborn, the Collector, whom he had seen hundreds of times, and whose family had shown themselves to have been his bitterest enemies. He had written to Samuel Swartwout desiring to ascertain if the coast were clear before venturing to New York, and while waiting for some word from him remained in strict seclusion. At length an answer came assuring him that he still had many friends; that his enemies were inactive, but that the creditors who held judgments against him were inexorable; nevertheless he was urged to come on immediately.

"Now for financiering," writes he, "that forlorn watch and some neckcloths are all that I can find which are salable, and they will barely suffice."

The watch in question was one of a number he had purchased for presents. While in Europe, he had

selected a ring watch and a medallion watch for Theodosia and a beautiful little timepiece for Gampillo. In his peregrinations he was always on the lookout for something to bring home; often begging himself for some pretty trinket he thought would please them. He ransacked shops and bazars for fine cambrics, handkerchiefs, ribands, silk stockings, stone settings, and books for Theodosia; while for his grandson, he had made in Sweden a fine collection of beautiful medals and rare coins. Upon these treasures his extremity made sad inroads. Some were sold and some were pledged to "keep the animal machine agoing," as he phrased it. Before sailing from Amsterdam he was obliged to pay the captain 480 guilders.

"How did I raise this?" The reply contains a dreadful disclosure. "I raised it by the sale of all my little meubles and loose property. Among others, alas! my dear little Gamp's; it is shocking to relate, but what could I do? The captain said it was impossible to get out of town without five hundred guilders. He had tried every resource and was in despair. The money must be raised or this voyage given up. So after turning it over and looking at it, and opening it, and putting it to my ear like a baby, and kissing it, and begging you a thousand pardons out loud, your dear, little, beautiful watch was—sold. I do assure you—

but you know how sorry I was. If my clothes had been salable, they would have gone first, that's sure. But heigh-ho when I get rich I will buy you a prettier one."

Again when leaving England he was obliged to resort to a similar expedient. Along with other beautiful reminders of his travels for Theodosia were some fine ribands for which he had paid seventy dollars. "How much do I regret this bagatelle of ribands. There were thirty-six yards; that is six different kinds of six yards each, chosen by myself at the Palais Royal for you; and they were really so pretty, and would have pleased you so much. But pardon, my dear Theo, what could I do? Everything must go, or I must stay." And now on this last stage of his journey when he was so anxious to get to New York, he found that the "forlorn watch" would not bring sufficient to meet his emergencies. He had overlooked one resource—the books he had brought with him, among which were some valuable dictionaries and works of reference. Seeking out Dr. Kirkland, President of Harvard, he effected a conditional sale of his Bayle and Moreri for the college, receiving in payment forty dollars. Having engaged passage on a sloop to New York, he paid his bill, embarked his effects, and the next morning made the following entry:

"On board the sloop *Rose*, Captain Dimon, off Boston harbor, May 30, 1812. At twelve last night I came aboard but the tide would not serve till one. I agreed to keep watch till that hour and then wake the Captain. The sloop lay at the end of the long wharf, and I passed the hour walking on the wharf or sitting on the timber, ruminating on things to come, and talking with you and Gampillo." They were always first in his thoughts. When should he see them again? When should he fold them in his arms? A few days later he wrote: "The wind fell last evening, and the night was calm and perfectly clear. Such a sky as I never saw in England or France. I passed some hours on deck admiring the brilliancy of the stars, following their majestic march through infinite space, and tracing the hand of Omnipotence. Presumptuous aim! Yet there is a charm in such contemplations, of which you know all the luxury. It is you only whose society I could endure on such occasions. Yes, my dear, little Gampillo, to introduce to his opening mind the wonders of nature and the soul."

The "*Rose*" cast anchor at Fairfield where her cargo of lumber was landed. The "strange gentleman" had once resided here. It was the birthplace of his father, and he decided to run the hazard of recognition by going ashore. It was no greater risk than he

had already taken. He had seen hundreds of persons who had known him in past years. Indeed the Captain of the vessel was a son of one of his most intimate friends, and his wife who had accompanied them this far was one of his own relatives and bore a striking resemblance to his only sister. His record of what he saw on shore is interesting: "Every object was as familiar to me as those about Richmond Hill, and the review brought up many pleasant and whimsical associations. At several doors I saw the very lips I had kissed and the very eyes that had ogled me in the persons of their grandmothers about six-and-thirty years ago. I did not venture into any of their houses lest some of the grandmothers might recollect me."

He landed at New York at midnight, June 7th. After cruising along the wharf for lodging and finding no place empty, he skirted the town, finally securing quarters in a garret where five men were already asleep. And here ends his journal to which we are so much indebted: "I threw open the window to have air, lay down and slept profoundly till six. Being already dressed, I rose, paid for my lodging twelve cents, and sallied out to 66 Water Street; and there had the good luck to find Sam (Swartwout) alone. He led me immediately to the house of his brother Robert,

and here I am, in possession of Sam's room in Stone Street, in the City of New York, on the eighth day of June, anno dom., 1812. Just four years since we parted at this very place."

Ten days later war was declared with Great Britain, and all other issues were forgotten in the clamor of the conflict. Being assured that he would not be molested by the government, and having secured an extension of time from his creditors, a notice was inserted in one of the city papers stating that Aaron Burr had returned to America, and that he would open a law office on Nassau Street. His friends flocked around him. Colonel Troup, whom he had assisted in other days and who had retired from the profession, loaned him his law library. With a tin sign and a borrowed capital of ten dollars he resumed his practice, and at the end of a fortnight had placed two thousand dollars to his credit. It was a time of litigation and the services of such an attorney as Burr, who, it is said, never lost a case, was eagerly sought for and generously rewarded. The outlook, to use his own expression, was auspicious, and he hastened to impart the good news to Theodosia. Their troubles and disappointments at last appeared to be over, and the rainbow of hope once more threw its radiant hues across life's horizon.

But how vain were his cherished anticipations; how soon were his skies to be o'erclouded. The boy whose tender years had budded with the promise of great things; who was to have restored the honor of a once noble name, was stricken by an unseen hand. As the springtime vanished and the roses faded, he, too, drooped like some fair flower, and on the last day of June little Gamp lay white and motionless in his silent chamber 'neath the shadow of the great oaks. The birds still sang in their branches, and the breeze that stirred their leafy depths crept through the open window and caressed his childish curls. His lambs still gamboled on the green, sometimes bleating piteously, but their little master gave no heed. On his breast his hands were quaintly folded, as if in sleep. But from that dreamless slumber the great tears of his loving father and the passionate kisses of his heart-broken mother would never wake him more.

Theodosia had written her father the middle of May that Gamp was well, and that his little soul warmed at the sound of his name; that his health had improved since they had adopted the plan of residing at Greenville during the summer, where they had purchased a farm and built a house, and that they would go there the latter part of June. Burr had planned to bring his grandson to New York as soon as he was

settled that he might have all the advantages that city afforded for education and where he could superintend his studies and direct his awakening genius. Who can imagine his feelings when Theodosia's agonizing cry reached him, "There is no more joy for me! The world is a blank! I have lost my boy! My child is gone forever!" Her husband added: "One dreadful blow has destroyed us; reduced us to the veriest, most sublimated wretchedness. That boy on whom all rested, our companion, our friend—he who was to have transmitted down the mingled blood of Theodosia and myself—he who was to have redeemed all your glory and shed new luster upon our families—that boy once our happiness and our pride, is taken from us—is dead."

Aaron Burr Alston lived eleven years, and at that early age had already gained more than a local reputation because of his superior talents and rare elevation of character. His grandfather's hopes were shattered, but if he recoiled at the blow; if he ever gave way to grief, no one witnessed it. He calmly drank the bitter cup, from which it was his lot to drain the very dregs, without a murmur. Sometimes a tear would be seen to steal down his cheek at the mention of his grandson's name, but his grief was only visible for a moment; with a mastering effort he would quickly check every sign of emotion. He tried to comfort

Theodosia but she was inconsolable. She was utterly prostrated, bewildered under the stress of her bereavement. Deep-seated grief made rapid inroads upon her already enfeebled constitution, and it was decided that she should go North and join her father in New York. Governor Alston had written him that he would probably be detained in the South by military matters, and that while he would reluctantly part with Theodosia, yet he believed that a change of scene and her father's society would aid in her recovery. As she was too weak to attempt the trip overland, her father sent one of his old friends, Timothy Green, in whose medical skill he had great confidence, to accompany her on the sea voyage.

They sailed from Charleston on the "Patriot," a pilot boat that had been out privateering, but having dismissed her crew was now returning to New York with her guns under deck. She was commanded by an experienced seaman, Captain Overstocks, and carried an old New York pilot as sailing master. Theodosia parted with her husband at noon on Thursday, December 30th, and a fair wind bore her out on the blue waters of the Atlantic.

On account of the Patriot's reputed swiftness in sailing, it was thought that not more than five or six days would be required for the voyage. A week went by

but no word came from the out-bound vessel. Another mail was received but no letters came from those on board the Patriot—only rumors of a heavy gale off the eastern coast. Other weeks dragged their weary lengths away—weeks filled with uncertainty, apprehension, torture. Who can describe the weary waiting, the wretched forebodings, the heart-rending despair. On the Battery at New York, a man with a military bearing and an anxious face paced restlessly up and down the principal promenade of the city. Ever and anon he gazed wistfully out across the tide, seeking a sail that never came. Day after day he returned with the same infinite longing in his soul, but his quest was unrewarded. Theodosia and the Patriot in which she sailed was never heard of again. When at last her father fully realized the awful truth; that there was naught to hope for; that she, too, was dead, his heart sank within him. He declared that life had lost its value; that he felt severed from the human race.

Many exaggerated rumors were circulated and many idle tales have since been told, but the end of the ill-starred Patriot remains a mystery to this day. Whether she was taken by pirates, or whether she perished in the storm off Cape Hatteras has not been verified, and not till old Neptune's secrets are all revealed and the sea gives up its dead will her fate

be known who during a critical illness once wrote:

"He who is wisdom itself ordains events; we must submit to them. Least of all should I murmur. I on whom so many blessings have been showered—whose days have been numbered by bounties—who have had such a husband, such a child, and such a father. Oh pardon me my God if I regret leaving these. I resign myself. Adieu."

CHAPTER XIX

THE FATE OF AMBITION

It is said that time heals all wounds; but there are sorrows it cannot efface. It has only the power to dull the sense of pain; to assuage the poignancy of grief; to temper the bitterness of bereavement. It was so with Aaron Burr. To all outward appearance, he was reconciled to his fate. He went about his affairs as usual; faced the world with a composed demeanor, but he never ceased to mourn for Theodosia and her boy.

The remaining twenty-four years of his life was a continual struggle with an ever-rising tide; debts and demands that were always accumulating; slights and scorns that were constantly reinforcing; petitions and entreaties that were unceasingly reiterating. He was the victim of his own improvidence. His door was besieged with beggars; his steps beset with creditors. He paid when he could; borrowed; loaned; gave—often his last dollar—that was always his way. Enmeshed with debts which were the only reminders of a more prosperous past—debts contracted for the expe-

dition—debts incurred during the trial, he realized as time went by the impossibility of extricating himself from his toils, and eventually, ceased to struggle. He was ostracized by society; slandered by those he had never harmed; shunned by the hangers-on of better days, but he gave no sign. He had suffered too deeply, and was moreover too much of a philosopher for these things to move him. Not that he was insensible to the good opinion of his fellow men, or that he undervalued the offering of friendship. None knew better than he the worth of a true friend; or regretted more the perfidy of a false one. But for the mad, unreasoning crowd, blindly following its lead, fawning today and spurning tomorrow, he had a supreme contempt. He made no effort to right himself with the world; to refute the slanders of his traducers; to regain his political status or social standing. Yet withal, he never forgot the claims of old friends or of the few who nobly stood by him during the remainder of his stormy career. He would empty his pockets of their last coin to relieve their need. Some were humble and obscure. Some were accused of being unworthy, but his reply was: "They may be black to the world—I care not how black—They were ever white to me."

Old soldiers of the Revolution and their children were the favored of his many pensioners. Luther

Martin who so valiantly defended him at Richmond, having impoverished himself by his prodigality found an asylum in his home where he was tenderly cared for until his death, at the age of eighty-one.

Colonel Burr also manifested a great interest in the welfare of young people. Many young men read law under his tuition, and many young women owed their education to his munificence. Vanderlyn, the artist who painted the "Landing of Columbus" in the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington and the portrait of Theodosia, which her father carried about with him over Europe, was one of his *protéges*. While waiting at a blacksmith shop near Kingston, New York, a boy in homespun garb attracted his attention by making a charcoal sketch of his horses and carriage. It was Vanderlyn, who was afterward taken into his house at Richmond Hill, educated, and sent to Europe to study art. Burr believed in following nature's bent. A girl in whom he took an interest was given lessons on the violin because of her talent for music. Another who showed an aptness in language, he taught New Testament Greek. His ideas in regard to education were liberal, and as already intimated far in advance of his time. Especially is this true in regard to his views relating to the education of women, and of their rights. His picture of Mary Wollstonecraft, author

of "A vindication of the Rights of Woman," was one of his most valued treasures, prized while living and given away on his death-bed to his best friend.

Just here a word in regard to his relations with women. They were always his best friends. Men deserted him, betrayed him. Women, never. His manner toward them was winning and courteous. They were attracted to him by his fascinating manners, his brilliant conversation, his beauty of face and figure, and above all by the charm of his wonderful eyes. One woman who knew him said "There were two things he could do better than any other man in the world; bow out an obnoxious visitor, and hand a lady to her carriage." By his delicate attentions, his sympathy, the grace of his stimulating powers, he won their regard—too often their hearts. That he was the gay Lothario he has been represented is to be doubted; that he was the gross debauchee he has been painted is not to be believed. His temperate habits, his fastidious tastes, his hale and hearty old age, stamp all such delineations of his character as glaring exaggerations. That he was a man of strict morals, no one will affirm; that he had many amours in his day, and that he was not always guiltless, no one will deny. This was one of the weak points in his armor. He lived in a licentious age. Europe was then in a state of moral and

religious declension. Church and state were there united, and the revolt against existing forms of government resulted in the breaking away from the established creeds of Christendom. The license of France, the laxity of Germany, and the liberalism of England were all reflected in the gallantry and skepticism of the young American republic.

Burr, like many other illustrious men, was tainted with the sins of his time. It has often been asserted—perhaps truly—that he was no worse than his great rival, Hamilton; that Jefferson and Franklin were not blameless in this respect; that the morals of his own biographer, Mathew Davis, who has perhaps done more to blacken his reputation than any other writer, living or dead, were notoriously incorrect. These with others have been allowed to, comparatively, go free. Why should Aaron Burr be judged more harshly than they? Is it just, that he alone should be made a scapegoat to bear the sins of all that dissolute generation.

In this connection we cannot refrain from giving a single story as recorded by John F. H. Claiborne, a representative of Congress and author of a history of Mississippi. The scene is laid in the vicinity of Colonel Osmun's at the time Burr's flotilla was anchored on the Louisiana shore.

"Colonel Osmun lived at the place now owned by Dr. Stanton, and Major Guion resided at the foot of the half-way hill, and there was a rural path between the two places trellised with vines and shaded by evergreens. This was Burr's daily resort. But its refreshing shade and charming prospect were not the only attractions. There lived at the time, near the summit of the hill in a little vine-covered cottage, a widow lady from Virginia whose small farm and two or three slaves were the only remains of a large fortune. Her husband had converted his property into money, and on his way to this territory had been robbed and murdered. The family were Catholics. She had but one child, Madeline, who must still be remembered by a few of our older citizens as a miracle of beauty: In form and feature, in grace and modesty, she was all that the old masters have pictured the divine Madonna, or that artists ever dreamed of maiden loveliness. Those who saw her loved her, yet she was never conscious of the sentiment until she listened to Aaron Burr.

"After canvassing his situation with Colonel Osmun and six other confidential friends, Colonel Burr determined to forfeit his bond. One stormy night in February, 1807, he set forth mounted on the favorite horse of his host. Urgent as was the necessity for expedition, Colonel Burr halted until daylight at the

widow's cottage, imploring the beautiful Madeline to be the companion of his flight. He promised marriage, fortune, high position, and even hinted at imperial honors, not realizing, even then, a fugitive and branded traitor, the crushing downfall that impended over him. The maiden had given him her heart; she had listened to his witchery night after night and loved him with all the fervor of a Southern nature. She would have followed him to the end of the earth, and to the scaffold, and her aged mother would have freely given her to this captivating man; for they looked on him as a demi-god, but as with most of our Southern women, the principles of religion, virtue, and propriety were stronger than prepossession and passion, and the entreaties of the accomplished libertine were firmly rejected. Baffled and disappointed he was compelled to proceed, but promised to return, and carried with him the covenant and pledge of the beautiful Madeline. She was wooed by many a lover. The young and gallant masters of the large plantations on Second Creek and St. Catherine's strove in vain for her hand. Fortunes and the homage of devoted hearts were laid at her feet, but the maid of the Half-way Hill remained true to her absent lover; the more so because of the rumors that reached her of his misfortunes and his guilt. She lived on the recollections of his manly

beauty, and the shades he had most affected were her constant haunts. At length, when he fled from the United States pursued by Mr. Jefferson and the remorseless agents that swarm around power and authority, when he had been driven from England, and was an outcast in Paris, shivering with cold and starving for bread, he seems to have felt for the first time, the utter hopelessness of his fortunes, and he wrote to Madeline, and in a few formal words, released her from her promise stating that he would never return to the United States; he advised her to enter a convent, should she survive her mother. A year or two after this, she went to Havana with Mrs. W., a highly respectable lady who then owned the property where the Christian Brothers reside, near Natches. Her extreme beauty, her grace and elegance, produced the greatest enthusiasm. The hotel where they put up was besieged. If she appeared on the balcony, a dozen cavaliers were waiting to salute her. When her volante was seen on the Pasco or the Plaza de Armas, it was escorted by the grandees of the Island. She was *feted* by the Governor General; serenades and balls followed in rapid succession, and the daily homage to her beauty never ceased until the bells sounded the *Angelus*.

"Without surrendering her heart or being carried

away by this universal admiration, she returned to the cottage on the Half-way Hill. She was followed there by Mr. K., an English gentleman, the head of the largest commercial house in Havana, and to him, on his second visit, she gave her hand.

"The vine covered cottage, its trellises and borders have crumbled into dust. The courtly lover and the innocent maiden are long since dead. But the old hill still lifts its aged brow wrinkled all over with traditions. A favorite lookout of the Natchez Indians in time of war. The scene of a daring conspiracy against the Spanish authority, the rendezvous of lovers, the hiding-place for brigands, and a depot for their blood-stained treasure, mute but faithful witness of the past."

At the age of seventy-eight, Burr made the mistake of many another old man—contracting a second marriage. The lady in the case was a Madame Jumel, widow of Stephen Jumel, a wealthy Frenchman. The union proved unhappy and they separated, although their nuptial bonds were never legally dissolved.

Amid all his varied experiences, there was one thing that was never forgotten—Mexico. From the time General Miranda, the South American patriot, plotted with Hamilton, Knox and other distinguished Americans for the revolutionizing of his country in 1798, Burr seems to have turned his eyes with longing toward the

great Southwest. He turned from his trials and sorrows to encourage the efforts of the South American patriots who were endeavoring to free themselves from the tyranny of their foreign oppressors. His counsel was eagerly sought by their representatives who visited the United States. He was granted a commission by the Republic of Venezuela. The Mexicans, engaged in a struggle similar to that which we have witnessed in Cuba, also solicited his services. "My voyage to this country," ran a letter from General Toledo, one of their trusted leaders, "has for its object not only to obtain the means for continuing the war, but to seek the person best capable of employing them. This is the desire of that people, and I can assure you that their wish and mine would be satisfied at the same time, if we should have the fortune of your assuming the management of our political and military affairs in the dangerous crisis in which we find ourselves.

"I hope that in behalf of the cause of America and of humanity, you will accept this offer which I have the honor to make you in the name of that people."

This urgent call was not accepted. Why had it not come in other days? He was growing old now—his spirit was broken—he had lost all of life's motive, yet he gave them his counsel and encouraged their

efforts so far as he was able. He carefully followed the affairs of Texas in her struggle for independence. One day in the spring of 1836, a friend upon calling found him with shining eyes and animated face. "There," he exclaimed, pointing to his newspaper, "you see I was right. I was only thirty years too soon! What was treason in me thirty years ago is patriotism now!"

That year witnessed the passing of Aaron Burr. One morning in December, 1833, while walking down Broadway he was stricken with paralysis, but he persistently clung to life and in a few weeks was again about his business as usual. A second stroke a few months later deprived him entirely of the use of his lower limbs. Aside from this and the ordinary infirmities of age, his general health remained unimpaired and his mental faculties as strong as ever. But he realized that his work was done, and the unaccustomed inaction sadly told on his energetic spirit. Yet despite all his afflictions he remained patient and courteous to the end.

It seems fitting that his last, best friend should have been a woman. She was the daughter of a Scottish officer who had been his friend years before. Like a good angel, she took him into her home, provided for all his wants, and watched over him with the same care she would have bestowed upon her own father.

Theodosia's picture was hung where he could look at it as he lay on his couch. For hours together he would silently contemplate her beautiful face, and sometimes as he gazed upon it tears were seen to slowly trickle down his furrowed cheeks. What memories must have flooded his restless brain as he lay there, helpless and forlorn. Thus surrounded by his books, relics, and pictures, and ministered to by his good Samaritan, he spent the two remaining years of his life.

It so happened that during the summer of 1836, the house where he resided, and which had formerly been the residence of Governor Jay, was to be torn down, and he was removed to a boarding house at Port Richmond on Staten Island. Here, on Wednesday afternoon, September 14th, he peacefully breathed his last. His final act was to lift his hand to his spectacles and faintly whisper one word—Madame. They were for her who had proved a friend in need. Without a struggle, he fell asleep. Had he lived a few months longer, he would have been eighty-one years old.

In compliance with his wish, he was buried at Princeton, where his funeral sermon was preached in the college chapel by the President, Dr. Carnahan. A large concourse of citizens attended the ceremonies, and the Mercer Guards, a military organization of Princeton, accompanied the body to the cemetery.

Some of his old friends, including the Swartwouts, Judge Edwards, and Mathew Davis, gathered about the casket as it was lowered to its last resting place. At the feet of his father and grandfather, Princeton's first presidents, was laid the gifted, though erring son of a distinguished ancestry.

In his life we see the fate of ambition. He sought to rule an empire, but he left no place he could call his own. His aspirations reached a throne, but he breathed his last on a humble cot in the house of another. He yearned for the acclamations of a liberated nation, but he died unwept and unsung. He coveted the wealth of the Incas, but he left only a stack of letters and legal manuscripts, some office furniture and a few pictures.

During his lifetime he was known as a man of mystery. It was in keeping with his strange career that his name should be commemorated in an extraordinary manner. For two years no stone marked his grave. What then was the surprise of the people of Princeton one morning to behold, within the locked gates of the cemetery, a substantial monument erected to his memory. None knew its donor. No one saw the hand that placed it there, yet through all these years it has borne silent testimony of one who loved him to the end. It bears this inscription :

Aaron Burr

Born February 6th, 1756

Died September 14th, 1836

A Colonel in the Army of the Revolution

Vice-President of the United States

from 1801 to 1805

CHAPTER XX

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

IN following the fate of Burr, the fortunes of Blennerhassett have for the time been held in abeyance. His journey to Philadelphia proved almost barren of results. His only good fortune was his meeting with Thomas Hart, of Lexington, who paid him \$832, being the amount saved from his losses on account of young Hart, two years before. Having finally broken with Burr on a writ to secure his demand of \$8,000, he started westward in the Pittsburg stage December 1st, 1807, and on the 15th of the month arrived at Marietta. At Pittsburg, he had joined Dr. Cummins in fitting out a boat, and while the latter remained to attend to the business above, he hurried on down the river to look after his affairs in the vicinity of the Island.

Only a year had elapsed since that dreary winter night he had bid good-bye to his wife down at the icy river-side. What changes had come with the months that had vanished. He found his once beautiful home but a wreck on an unfriendly shore. No happy faces

greeted his approach. No eager voices announced his coming. No loving caresses welcomed him on the threshold. His footsteps alone broke the oppressive stillness of the vacant hall; their echoes sounding hollow and unnatural as they died away in the lonely chambers. Here and there he wandered aimlessly, his heart smitten with the memories of other days. The rooms had been stripped of their costly furnishings; their beauty defaced by vandal hands. There was the graceful cornice, shattered by the soldier's musket ball; the beautiful window-casings torn away to secure their leaden sash-weights. Even the stone roller used in leveling the lawn had been broken in pieces to obtain its iron axle.

His implements of husbandry and farming stock had been sold along with the other property. These with the furniture and house-linen, two-thirds of the library, and philosophical instruments according to his computation could not be replaced for less than \$15,000, not to mention the higher estimate of things grown priceless because of their associations. Much had been sacrificed at the hands of those ignorant of their value, and wholly incapable of appreciating their worth. The remaining supplies of the expedition on the Island including 11 barrels of pork, 5 barrels of beef, and 25 barrels of whiskey was more to their taste;

bringing a total of \$1056.38. Ransom Reed, the faithful servant of Mrs. Blennerhassett, had been sold to satisfy a claim of George Creel's amounting to \$35.25. Her favorite horse, Robin, had been stolen by one Welch, and her precious treasures of boudoir and drawing-room had been scattered far and wide over the wilderness; to be sought in later times by more appreciative collectors.

It was with a feeling of relief that Blennerhassett, after getting together what he could of their former belongings, was again afloat down the Ohio. The time had gone by for his appearance at Chillicothe, and although he had retained Burnett and Baldwin at Marietta to defend him he had in the end determined to avoid his detention, if attempted, by escaping beyond the line, about sixty miles below Natchez. When within a short distance of this place, he sent honest Moses, one of the servants he had brought with him, to accompany Mrs. Blennerhassett to the boats in order to ascertain whether the coast was clear before venturing on shore. But he need have given himself no uneasiness on that score as no pursuit was attempted, and the prosecution was allowed to lapse.

Thus did he return after an absence of nine months' trial and suffering to his family at Natchez. It was out of the question to go back to the Island, and

encouraged by his wife he began to look around for some enterprise whereby he might hope to repair their sadly shattered fortune. Cotton was at that time the one great staple in that far Southland. Many had received rich returns for their holdings devoted to its production. Why should they not be able in a few years to amass a sufficient sum by raising cotton to return to the North where the boys could have better educational advantages than were afforded by that new country? At length a purchase of one thousand acres was made near Gibsonport, Mississippi. A remittance of 300 pounds from Lord Ventry in Ireland being the balance due on the sale of his estate, enabled Blennerhassett to make a fresh start in his new field of endeavor. With a small number of slaves, he now engaged in the culture of cotton on his new estate, which they named La Catche (the hiding place.)

The trying afflictions undergone by Mrs. Blennerhassett had not subdued her spirits, and grateful that her husband was again restored to his family she was inclined to make the most of the situation, and set about to assist him in the management of their plantation. Mounting her horse at sunrise, she would carry to the overseer the instructions for the day. Her task completed, she would return with the sunshine about her to brighten her household as she had

been wont to do on the Island. Her presence shed a radiance on the humble home, as in the mansion of old, but it was now, and ever after a subdued light.

Unaccustomed to battle with the adversities of life and altogether unfitted to meet its trying emergencies, Blennerhassett struggled helplessly with the tide that bore him slowly but steadily onward. While brooding over his misfortunes during the trial at Richmond, he wrote in his journal: "I have so long been dazed with the incessant vexations of my prosecution, that I sometimes imagine my apathy is better lent me to befit me for the future frowns of unsteady Fortune than to prepare for her insidious smiles. I am already her puppet."

Unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less surely was his own forecast fulfilling. So far as human foresight could determine the cause of his failure, he did not have sufficient means to begin with. Hence he was unable to purchase as many slaves as he needed to work his estate to the best advantage. Again, the non-intercourse and embargo acts completely paralyzed the shipping interests of the country; especially was this true of the industries of the South. Produce would scarcely pay for the marketing. Cotton lay piled up in the warehouses for want of purchasers. England had a two-years' supply on hand, and with

our markets closed to her manufactures, the outlook was indeed gloomy. As early as March 26, 1811, Joseph S. Lewis, of Philadelphia, notified Blennerhassett that he had not been able to sell a bale of the cotton the latter had consigned, and that their advances to him at that date amounted to about \$8,000. At the end of that year their account showed a balance against him of more than \$12,000. Then there were his obligations at home. As time went by he realized that debt like some horrid, many tentacled octopus was drawing its deadly coils ever closer around him. He thought as a last resort of selling the Island and was urged by Lewis & Co., in view of their claim, to do so. What was his dismay when he learned through them that Mr. Woodbridge had brought word from the Ohio that their beloved mansion had accidentally been burned to the ground. This stroke, he knew so injured the property, that with Miller's mortgage of \$4,000 hanging over it, there was no hope of relief from that quarter. So distressing was the situation, that it was determined to bring Dominick home from Philadelphia, whither he had gone to school in June, 1809. Joseph Lewis would not hear to this, and made Blennerhassett a still further concession by allowing him to draw on their house for about \$3,000 on his cotton crop, which enabled him to pay his pressing

claims at home and provide for his family expenses.

In his embarrassment, he again appealed to Governor Alston in a long and importunate letter, in which he gave vent to his pent-up feelings in a manner so unlike his usual complacency that it must have given his Excellency quite a shock. He began by saying that he had long since despaired of all indemnity for his losses from Mr. Burr; that he should hereafter consider any reference to his honor, good faith or resources in no other light than a scandal to any man offering it who had not already sunk as low as himself; that it devolved upon Alston to reimburse him for all losses both direct and contingent. "To this end I now apprise you that the period has arrived in which I feel myself warranted to tell you that in virtue of your oral and written assurances to guarantee me against all injuries to my property by reason of my participation in the confederacy of 1806, I finally determined to embark with you, and have thereby sustained damage to the amount of \$50,000, of which sum I now demand \$15,000, payable in New Orleans or Philadelphia in August next. The respective sums you have paid already in part discharge of your written obligation, I believe, \$12,500 together with the \$15,000 now required will leave a balance of \$22,500 which you may if you please adjust by your obligation; on receipt of which, if re-

quired, I will dismiss my demand against Mr. Burr by suit in Philadelphia."

In case he failed to comply with this demand, Blennerhassett threatened the publication of a book he had written implicating Alston in the enterprises of Burr and himself. Would he have it suppressed? or would he permit its secrets to be proclaimed "to the honest Democratic electors of South Carolina, who would thence remove you from the chair of their assembly with a different kind of zeal from that through which they placed you in it."

It is to be regretted that Blennerhassett ever resorted to such an expedient to extort money from Alston, but it must be remembered that he was almost driven to desperation by his grievous losses and the ill-fortune which like an avenging Nemesis insistently followed him as long as he lived. Whether justly or not he blamed his unfortunate alliance with Burr for all his troubles. But for Burr he might still be pursuing his favorite researches in science and literature amid the secluded haunts of his beautiful Island. But for him he might still be surrounded by peace and plenty in his mansion, instead of bankrupted in fortune, besieged with creditors, and haunted by fears of a distressed family. Had he not furnished the money to procure the boats, provisions and other

supplies? Had not his property been sacrificed, his means dissipated? What had he received in return? What effort had Burr or Alston made during these years to relieve his distress? Had they not rather shown a lofty indifference to his sufferings? He forgot that Alston had sacrificed as much or more than he. He had told Blennerhassett in Richmond that his losses would aggregate at least \$50,000; that Burr was impoverished; that back of his own reverses was the high-handed persecution of the government, and the wanton destruction of his property by its accredited agents.

Alston treated his application and the threats it contained with silent contempt, and Blennerhassett despairing of anything in that quarter, next turned upon Burr. Proceedings were instituted against him at New Orleans to recover some securities believed to be available, and upon his return from Europe Blennerhassett addressed a letter to him on the subject calling attention to the demand he had made upon Alston and the book he proposed publishing.

"His well-earned election to the chief executive office of his state and your return from Europe will, however, now render the publication more effective than it would have been prior to these events, and it will be expedited within three months from this date,

if all other means of indemnity fail within that period. I would still agree to accept from any other source \$15,000 in lieu of the balance I claim of \$37,500, and of course withhold the book which is entitled: 'A Review of the Projects and Intrigues of Aaron Burr, during the years 1805-6-7, including therein, as parties or privies Thos. Jefferson, Albert Gallatin, Dr. Eustis, Gov. Alston, Dan. Clark, Generals Wilkinson, Dearborn, Harrison, Jackson, and Smith, and the late Spanish Ambassador, —, exhibiting original documents and correspondence hitherto unpublished, completed from the notes and private Journal kept during the above period; by Harman Blennerhassett, L.L.D.,' with this motto which will find application in every page of the book: 'It is only the philosopher who knows how to mark the boundary between celebrity and greatness.'"

But for obvious reasons the \$15,000 was not forthcoming, neither was the much-vaunted publication, presumably for want of funds.

The trying years of the war already begun, and its accompany-embargo left sad traces on the slender resources of La Cache plantation. At the same time an increase in the Master's family was an additional cause for solicitude. A little Margaret born ten years before on the Island had fortunately died in infancy,

but now a third son, Joseph Lewis, took up a permanent place in the household. As time went by, Blennerhassett become more and more dissatisfied with his situation, and realizing his inability to otherwise extricate himself from his toils he decided, after ten years' occupation to sell his Mississippi plantation. His advertisement of the property describes the estate as consisting of "One thousand acres of land, two hundred of which is under cultivation, a dwelling house, orchard, and cotton gin, with many other improvements, within thirty-six miles of Washington, Mississippi Territory, and six from navigation; also twenty-two negroes, the whole estimated at the sum of \$27,000."

The proceeds of this sale enabled him to discharge the debts which had been the source of so much anxiety, with a small balance remaining. With this, in 1819, he emigrated with his family to Canada. This step was taken in the hope that the recently appointed Governor, who was an old friend, and who on hearing of his ill-fortune had tendered his sympathy and assistance, might be able to secure him a provincial judgeship. On arriving at Montreal the coveted office could not be obtained, and a law-partnership was formed with a gentleman by the name of Rossiter. Fearing their remaining treasure might be squandered, an investment was made in a few shares of Montreal

bank stock for Mrs. Blennerhassett. Her husband's ill-luck still followed him. The law venture proved unsuccessful, and his friend, the Duke of Richmond, having been removed from the Governor's office by the capriciousness of the British ministry, he was compelled to seek relief from some other quarter.

During the trial at Richmond, he had received a communication from a friend in Ireland regarding an estate of the late Dean Harman, to which it was believed he had fallen heir by virtue of his descent from Wentworth Harman. Again, in 1815, he received a letter from Thomas Addis Emmet, of New York, inclosing some correspondence from a solicitor, a Mr. Berwick, of Dublin, who was engaged in collecting information regarding this property known as the Bawn estate, and to which in his opinion Blennerhassett was entitled in right of his descent from the Harman family. Unfortunately his situation and the expense attached in making good his rights had hindered Blennerhassett all these years in the pursuit of his claim. But now as a last resort he determined to prosecute his right to this estate in his native land. His wife with Harman, Jr. and Lewis were sent to Troy, New York, in care of a friend by the name of Dickinson, and Blennerhassett in the summer of 1822 sailed for Ireland.

With what different feelings did he view the shores of the receding continent from which he had greeted them a quarter of a century before. Then he was young, wealthy, and blessed with health. How he had yearned for this Western land with its bright skies, its inviting prospects, its refuge and repose. How he had hailed it as a haven of love and liberty. In some sylvan retreat, far apart from the wondering world with its prying eyes and itching ears he would build a charming chateau for himself and his beautiful bride. There in the wilderness, surrounded with his books and instruments, to revel in literature, music, science, and Arcadian delights. All unconscious was he of the tragic threads Fate was weaving in his destiny. How rude had been his awakening. He had lived to see every bright hope vanish, every bubble broken; his fortune lost; his health impaired; his mansion in ashes; his family distressed; his name dishonored. What did the future hold for him?

Not less gloomy were his reflections as he neared his native isle, where he returned an outcast, a prodigal, a stranger in an unfriendly land. The next day after his arrival he sought out Mr. Berwick, the solicitor. What was his surprise and mortification to learn that Dean Harman had been dead more than twenty years, and that his claim was barred by the statute of limita-

tions. The estate was then in possession of Lord Ross *ci devant*, Oxmantown, who was not only wealthy but influential, and moreover not disposed to surrender control, or in any way assist the unfortunate Blennerhassett. Was he always to be doomed to disappointment? Almost destitute, and having abandoned all hope of recovering the estate in question, he felt compelled to make some desperate effort for an existence. A number of his old classmates were connected with the existing government, besides he was related to several dignitaries of state, and he reasoned that from these he had the right to expect some assistance; so he set about to secure an office under the government.

While thus engaged, it would be well to return to Mrs. Blennerhassett who with two of her boys was wandering somewhere in the state of New York. Her husband's last letter from Quebec reached her at Flatbush, a suburb of New York City. Thither she had come for comfort and advice of her best friends, the Emmets, and where it was believed she could live with greater economy and convenience than at Troy. She and Mrs. Emmet had not seen each other for a long time; many changes had come, and they celebrated their meeting with a "good cry." Whereupon Mr. Emmet good naturedly remarked that they were so foolish he would leave them until they had recovered.

Three days were spent with them in the country—they were very kind to her, and cheered her with hopes of her husband's success. She found boarding very high, and engaged two rooms in a farm house; but with all her saving she could not maintain her family for less than ten dollars per week. On summing up her expenses, she decided to go to her sister, Mrs. Dow, who with her husband lived at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In order to further economize she concluded to leave Mary, her colored housemaid, but found it impossible to get rid of her, as Mary declared that she never would leave her, nor allow her to pay a dollar of her traveling expenses.

Dominick, her oldest son, who had been educated for a surgeon, had sailed for Savannah three weeks before. Her separation from both her husband and son; her limited resources and forlorn condition overburdened her with distress which found expression in a letter to the former July 29, 1822: "This house is only three miles from the bay and on a still night when I could not sleep, but listened to the roaring of the sea, O! it was dreadful. Poor Dominick! Perhaps he is on it yet. God help me! I have lived too long, indeed, yet still I hope to meet you again; and could I render the remainder of your life happy, what matters all the present sufferings I undergo."

She and her two younger sons remained at Wilkes-Barre from the last of August till the closing days of December, when she received information that Dominick, after a prolonged attack of yellow fever, had returned to New York. His sickness had so involved him in debt that he had given his clothes and books to defray his passage back to that city. Mrs. Blennerhassett with all the warmth of a mother's love hastened back to New York, arriving on Christmas eve. Her meeting with her son is given in her own words: "Robert Emmet was conducting me to their house when Dominick espied me and hid rather than excite my feelings in the street. 'Twas well he did; for the next morning when he came to me at Mr. Emmet's his appearance was shocking beyond all description. It gave me, however, consolation to know that my timely appearance prevented his enlistment; for on that very day he had resolved to do so as the only means of escaping starvation."

After consulting with her friends, Mrs. Blennerhassett wrote to Colonel Henderson at Washington, who obtained from the Secretary of War the promise of an appointment as surgeon's assistant for Dominick in Commodore Porter's Expedition, which was to sail in a very short time. In her desire to assist her wayward son, who promised to reform his dissipated habits, she

sold a share of her bank stock to buy the necessary clothing and pay his expenses to Washington. A week went by and his mother was hoping for the best when one day to her astonishment Dominick entered her room like a specter. His return to his old habits had so disgusted Colonel Henderson that he had given him thirty dollars and straightway sent him back to his heart-broken mother.

"Thus ended the business," she wrote to her husband, "and thus I am burdened with this unfortunate child, whose existence I will prolong while my own lasts, whether you gain an independence or I am obliged to return to a situation which, however humble, will yet afford me means of giving him bread; and which I now no more expect him to gain himself than I should do had it pleased God to bring him an idiot into the world. My obligations in that event could not be greater to maintain him than it is at present. Indeed, the most hopeless idiot has no more claims on a mother's care and solicitude than he; for I firmly believe he has no longer the power to reform from drink; and did I not guard him, even to the preservation and custody of his own clothes, he would be stripped at once; yet he is to me as docile as a lamb. I have placed him with a poor but excellent woman, who boards him for three dollars and a half a week. I cannot trust him

with money, though certainly there never was a more devotedly affectionate son."

In this way matters went on during the winter and spring of 1823. Having spent all her money, and not wishing to encumber her little bank stock, as she had expected her husband to return by the spring ships, she paid her way for some weeks by borrowing from Mr. Emmet. But Blennerhassett did not return, and there seemed to be nothing she could do here; her family expenses at sixteen dollars per week was rapidly depleting her little hoard, and, acting upon the advice of Mr. Rossiter and the Emmets, she made ready to go back to Montreal. Two more shares of her bank stock were sacrificed, and a last word of advice given poor Dominick before departing. She told him he must think of his father, who now had nothing, and of the other children and try to maintain himself; but let her tell it in her own way: "Having received the money for two shares of my bank stock, which Robert sold, and leaving Harman with my necessary baggage, and money sufficient to maintain him until your arrival, my last severe task yet remained to see and bid adieu to my unfortunate though dearly beloved son. Harman sought him out and found him already enlisted; brought him to me at the Steamboat Hotel, dressed in a common soldier's garb, but quite happy

and unconcerned. O God! had I been guilty of the greatest crime, the punishment of that moment ought to have expiated it; but the subject is too painful to dwell upon. I will only add that he went with a detachment up the Mississippi, and is now I believe acting as a surgeon's mate, and as yet I have received no communication from him."

With her youngest son she journeyed to Montreal, where Harman, Jr., later joined them. A cottage and garden was rented at twenty pounds per year. This arrangement was made for one reason because it was cheaper than boarding; for another that she might have a home, be it ever so humble, to receive her husband on his return. She implored him should his mission fail: "Then turn your thoughts to something at home. I care not what if it will only furnish us bread. But to be parted from you I can no longer bear; *and if being with you should have the effect of injuring either your interest or reputation, then let me be lodged somewhere in obscurity, where I may sometimes see you, and, in the event of Lewis's being in the navy give me the chance of seeing and hearing from him occasionally.* As to your coming in December, 'tis utterly out of the question; and should you to my surprise, obtain the appointment you seek, it cannot be before next June. We must winter here at all events,

during which time I hope to hear from you again. My situation at present is alarming, I have only six shares remaining in bank, after the utmost economy. 'Tis true I have furnished my house, though humbly, and paid three months' rent in advance, and have also one hundred dollars by me, but what is this? I had resolved before I received your letter to commence at the expiration of the term now paid for, in a larger dwelling and keep a boarding-house, which from the reduced rents, cheap markets, and high rate of board, might have at least maintained us, if it did not prove profitable. But now I cannot degrade myself while there is a hope remaining of your success."

When the former affluence of Margaret Blennerhassett is remembered; her beauty and accomplishments; her high position in society, this plaintive cry echoing across the sea, is one of the most touching passages in this pathetic story. Underneath it ran the current of the hidden tragedy, whose dread secret appears to have nowhere else so nearly approached the surface as in this moving entreaty. She spoke of her friends in the homeland, her suffering and exile, and wondered when it would all end. Sometimes she dreamed of a far-away island with its enswathement of sparkling waters and shining sands, sun-kissed and radiant at dewy morn; dreamy and glamorous in the

afterglow of evening-time; of a stately mansion, white-winged and forest-girdled; of happy children at play amid the shrubbery before its door. Then a vision of its ruin and utter desolation would pass before her, blurred by blinding, though unavailing tears. Painful as the subject was to one of her domestic nature, it nevertheless appealed to her higher poetic temperament. In the spring of 1824 a volume bearing her signature appeared at Montreal, entitled "The Widow of the Rock and Other Poems." Its contents included the following plaintive lament for

THE DESERTED ISLE

The stranger that descends Ohio's stream,
Charmed with the beauteous prospects that arise,
Marks the soft isles that, 'neath the glittering beam,
Dance with the wave and mingle with the skies,
Sees, also, one that now in ruin lies,
Which erst, like fairy queen, towered o'er the rest,
In every native charm, by culture dress'd

To that fair isle reverts the pleasing dream.
Again thou risest, in thy green attire,
Fresh as at the first thy blooming graces seem;
Thy groves, thy fields, their wonted sweets respire;
Again thou'rt all my heart could e'er desire.
O! why, dear Isle, art thou not still my own?
Thy charms could then for all my griefs atone.

There rose the seat where once, in pride of life,
 My eye could mark the queenly river's flow,
 In summer's calmness, or in winter's strife,
 Swollen with rains, or battling with the snow.
 Never again my heart such joy shall know.
 Havoc and ruin, rampant war have pass'd
 Over that isle, with their destroying blast.

Sweet Isle! methinks I see thy bosom torn;
 Again behold the ruthless rabble throng,
 That wrought destruction taste must ever mourn.
 Alas! I see thee now, shall see thee long;
 But ne'er shall bitter feelings urge the wrong
 That, to a mob, would give the censure due
 To those that arm'd the plunder-greedy crew.

And, oh! that I could wholly wipe away
 The memory of the ills that worked thy fall;
 The memory of that all-eventful day
 When I return'd and found my own fair hall
 Held by the infuriate populace in thrall,
 My own fireside blockaded by a band
 That once found food and shelter of my hand.

* * * * *

Too many blissful moments there I've known,
 Too many hopes have there met their decay;
 Too many feelings now forever gone,
 To wish that thou couldst ere again display
 The joyful coloring of thy prime array;

Buried with thee, let them remain a blot,
With thee, their sweets, their bitterness forgot.

The black'ning fire has swept throughout her halls;
The winds fly whistling o'er them, and the wave
No more in spring-floods o'er the sand-beach crawls,
But furious drowns in one o'erwhelming grave
Thy hallowed haunts it watered as a slave.
Drive on, destructive flood! and ne'er again
On that devoted isle let man remain.

The story now moves apace. Disappointment and misfortune continued to follow in the wake of Blennerhassett as unerringly as before. He had continued, across the water, to zealously prosecute his quest for office, but always with the same result. At the suggestion of his wife he had applied through the Marquis of Anglesey to Earl Bathurst for a position under the government in the Colonial Department. He had also sought for promotion under Lord Courtney. Appeal had finally been made to Hon. Nev. de Courcy to aid him in securing a diplomatic or judicial office in the service of the Portuguese government. If everything else failed, he offered as a forlorn hope to serve his Majesty in an ecclesiastical character. This last move, Mrs. Blennerhassett regarded with apparent alarm. She wrote him that with the constantly changing policies of Portugal the fallen had little to

expect but death or imprisonment, and, "As to have anything to do with the church that would be running into the lion's mouth—I fear it is here alone we can hope to end our days without starvation."

The fact is that he was reduced to such straits that he was willing to do almost anything; to go almost anywhere; to serve any cause whereby he might gain a subsistence for himself and his miserable family. In his extremity his maiden sister, Avice, generously offered to share her home with him and his wife, who had expressed a desire to watch over her declining days. He therefore returned to Canada for his family. It was well on Mrs. Blennerhassett's account, who had "grown sick with hope deferred," that this step was taken. He found his son Harman full-grown, but, alas, lacking in application and decision of character. For some time he had done nothing but indulge in miscellaneous reading; planning on the return of his father to go south and engage in teaching. Lewis had progressed very rapidly in his studies, and seemed to have much more energy than either of his brothers, and he was, moreover, devotedly attached to his father.

Having completed his arrangements Blennerhassett sailed from Quebec with his wife and youngest son never to return. His sister's home was known as Cres-

cent Cottage, and was situated at Bath in the County of Somersetshire, England. Here Mrs. Blennerhassett found a retreat and much needed rest, while her husband resumed his arduous search for employment. His old friend General Devereux having incurred the displeasure of the English government to such an extent that he was not permitted to return to his native land, had later succeeded in rendering substantial service to the Republic of Columbia. On the strength of Devereux's claims, Blennerhassett applied to him for an appointment under the Columbian government, or in case the General accepted a foreign embassy, he asked that he might act as his secretary. His next application was made to his kinsman, the Marquis of Wellesley to locate him in some civil position in Ireland that would enable to keep his family from want.

Various shifts were made for a livelihood: Some of his musical compositions were sent for publication to a journal conducted by Thomas Campbell, the poet, which were returned with thanks and the information that the "New Monthly" never inserted pieces of music. He essayed giving private instruction to young gentlemen, with no better results. To make matters worse, Mrs. Blennerhassett, whose health had been seriously impaired by suffering and exposure, con-

tinued to decline. Her physician advised as the only hope of relief, her removal to some section where the climatic changes were less frequent and extreme. It was decided that the Island of Jersey in the British Channel would be a suitable location. So with his family and aged sister, Blennerhassett took up his abode at St. Aubin on that island. From this place, May 31, 1827, he renewed his application to Lord Anglesey, but with no better success than before.

Fortune had closed her ears to all his appeals. He had seen others rise from reverse and disaster, but he knew that for him her doors were effectually closed; that to the bitter end he was doomed to knock in vain; that what he termed "a long train of adverse circumstances" would end only at the grave. For this he had not long to wait. One year later came the premonition of the closing of his career, when he was seized with a paralysis of his left arm and side. "How it may terminate," he writes his son Harman, "I know not, but whenever I shall be called away from this sublunary to another, and I doubt not a better state, I shall not apprehend that my soul will be anything less jocular there than here. That thought in the Emperor Adrian's soliloquy, or rather address to his departing soul, is not so happily conceived as the sportive playfulness with which he expresses in beautiful

diminutives his philosophical composure, *in articulo mortis*. The lines are these:

"Anima vagula blandula
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quo nunc abidis in loco?
Palidula, frigida, stridulis,
Nec dabis ut soles joca!"

After three years spent at St. Aubin it was decided again to remove; this time to the Island of Guernsey. To Port Pierre, on that coast, he made his final journey, save one. Here a second attack followed, then a third, and on February 1, 1831, the last cord was severed that bound him to things terrestrial. Pillowed on the arm that had been his stay through all the gloom-some years, he breathed his last. Death to him was not an unwelcome visitor. Burdened with an unbroken chain of disaster and disappointment that bound him as with a spell, he met it with the composure and indifference of a philosopher.

True to her trust, Mrs. Blennerhassett remained in England till after the death of her husband's sister Avice. It seemed to be her mission to be always caring for some one. In 1840, she returned to New York to watch over Harman, who had become a helpless invalid, and a year later was joined by Joseph

Lewis. Broken in health, menaced by impending poverty, charged with the care of a dependent son, and believing she had just cause for redress, she resolved upon presenting her grievance to Congress and asking restitution for the wanton destruction of her Island home. In her plea she observed :

“Your memorialist does not desire to exaggerate the conduct of the said armed men, or the injuries done by them, but she can truly say, that, before their visit, the residence of her family had been noted for its elegance and high state of improvement; and that they left it in a comparative state of ruin and waste. And, as instances of the mischievous and destructive spirit which appeared to govern them, she would mention, that, while they occupied as a guard-room one of the best apartments in the house, the building of which cost nearly forty thousand dollars, a musket or rifle ball was deliberately fired into the ceiling, by which it was much defaced and injured; and that they wantonly destroyed many pieces of valuable furniture. She would also state that, being apparently under no restraint, they indulged in continual drunkenness and riot, offering many indignities to your memorialist and treating her domestics with violence.”

“These outrages were committed upon an unoffending and defenseless family, in the absence of their

natural protector, your memorialist's husband being then away from home; and that in answer to such remonstrances as she ventured to make against the consumption, waste, and destruction of his property, she was told, by those who assumed to have the command, that they held the property for the United States, by order of the President, and were privileged to use it, and should use it as they pleased. It is with pain your memorialist reverts to events, which, in their consequences, have reduced a once happy family, from affluence and comfort, to comparative want and wretchedness; which blighted the prospects of her children, and made herself, in the decline of life, a wanderer on the face of the earth."

This statement was corroborated by the testimony of Morgan Neville and William Robinson, who it will be remembered were present at the time of the occurrence, and was accompanied by an estimate made out by Dudley Woodbridge. The documents were forwarded to Senator Henry Clay by Robert Emmet, son of Thomas Addis Emmet, with the following explanation: "Mrs. Blennerhassett is now in this (New York) city, residing in very humble circumstances, bestowing her cares on a son, who, by long poverty and sickness, is reduced to utter imbecility, both of body and mind, unable to assist her or provide for his

own wants. In her present destitute situation the smallest amount of relief would be thankfully received by her. *Her condition is one of absolute want*, and she has but a short time left to enjoy any better fortune in this world."

Mr. Clay, who had known Blennerhassett in his better days, who had defended him at Lexington, and who greatly sympathized with his widow in her distress, presented her petition and eloquently urged the passage of some measure for her relief. The matter was referred to a committee of which Hon. William Woodbridge was chairman, who reported that her claim was deemed legal and proper, and that notwithstanding thirty-six years had elapsed, it ought to be allowed; adding, that "not to do so would be unworthy a wise and just nation." Their well-meant endeavors came too late. As various agencies had combined to deprive her of all earthly store and happiness; so it was her lot never to enjoy the benefits of her country's tardy justice. Before Congress had taken any final action death came to relieve the suffering applicant of all human need of help. In a humble dwelling, attended by Joseph Lewis, Harman, and the faithful Mary, she sank to rest. With her friends, the Emmets, they silently followed her to St. Paul's Church-yard on Broadway, where her worn and broken body at

last found well-earned repose; and where undisturbed by the feverish rush and turmoil of the great city, remains all that is mortal of the once accomplished Maragaret Blennerhassett.

Her husband sleeps across the sea, while far to the West lies the island that bears their name. Few traces of their occupation are left behind. They never appeared to be a part of that sturdy West. In truth, their story appears more like some misty legend or romancer's tale than historical fact. There was always something unsubstantial, unreal, almost uncanny about the winged mansion that had risen as by magic in the wilderness. Many were the conjectures and dark surmises entertained by their more prosaic neighbors, but they were never able to penetrate the mystery that brooded over it. Its secret was well kept. Whatever it was, seemed to have been buried with the unhappy fugitives who left it to its fate, and not until late years has the fact come to light that Blennerhassett's secret was not of a political but domestic nature; that before leaving England he had clandestinely married his niece; that the fair Margaret was his own sister's child. It was an awful disclosure. No wonder they shrank from the consequences of their act. For this they fled from their native shores; for this they sought to escape the frown of friends and

the scorn of the world; for this they sought to hide in the wilds of America. But their sin found them out. who will say whether the misfortunes which followed were mere matters of chance, coincidence, or retribution. Nature and revelation unite in declaring that as we sow, so shall we reap. They sowed to the wind; they reaped the whirlwind.

CHAPTER XXI

AN END TO ALL THINGS

AARON BURR was no more, but the spirit which animated him and his followers in 1806 still survived. It was unquenchable. Not till our day, however, have historians accredited the significance of the expedition he projected; have they recognized the unity of the filibustering enterprises in the great Southwest; have they seen the trend of the movements headed by such men as Burr, Clark, and Houston; and the last word in the annals of that time will not be told in recounting the sporadic outbreaks of patriotic or ambitious leaders, but in tracing the genesis of their undertakings. They were alike in kind, and all grounded upon the Anglo-Saxon element in the character of their adherents. The red blood of conquest ran riot in the veins of these resolute frontiersmen. The dominating instinct of their Teutonic ancestors was strong within them. Their Spanish incursions were but vents of a pent-up energy striving to be free; a struggle for expansion inborn and characteristic of the race; an aggression that battered down the walls

of Rome, that brooked no rivalry in a Viking age, that swept over the waters of the Western seas, over-leaped the bounds of the great river beyond, stayed not at sunset on the farther shore, that today is sailing on the high seas toward universal dominion.

Various ones, at different times, attempted to direct this flood toward the accomplishment of their own plans—sometimes for their own aggrandizement; but in the outcome, it was the legionaries rather than the leaders who won the spoils, and it is to them belongs the due meed of victory. The Spaniards in their generation were wiser than we. They recognized the continuity of the outbreaks along their borders. They saw the westward tendency of this turbulent tide, and too well realized their impotency to check the mighty flood pressing ever closer upon them. Napoleon likewise saw the handwriting on the wall. Jefferson and his envoys only asked of him a single city and some arpents of land; he thrust upon them an empire in its vast extent. It was the Westerners and not diplomacy who won the Territory of Louisiana, who established the Texan republic on Mexican soil, who carried their victorious banners through the gates of the very city where Aaron Burr had hoped to rule as emperor.

This war resulting from the Texas embroglio se-

cured to the national domain the great mineral belt of the republic, embracing New Mexico, California, and Arizona, and forever settled the recurrence of all such filibustering, glory-seeking schemes as those of Aaron Burr and his fellows. Up to this time the coveting of Mexico had led many a man astray, not to mention the national infraction of the Decalog. It was Burr's only crime; and it should be remembered that he sought it not for himself alone, but for Theodosia and her boy. "These," he wrote on his first voyage down the Ohio, "will control my fate." To the last he declared that he had never entertained any design hostile to the United States, or any part thereof. A few months before his death, when it was thought that he could live but a few days, perhaps hours, he was asked by Mathew Davis whether or not he had designed a separation of the Union. His reply was characteristic: "No; I would as soon have thought of taking possession of the moon, and informing my friends that I intended to divide it among them."

Mexico was the goal of all his dreams. That he failed to make himself its master was owing to time and circumstance rather than any fault of his own. Had his enterprise been launched a few months earlier, or even some years later the result might have been altogether different; who knows? He, instead of the

priest Hidalgo, might have led the first formidable revolt against its Spanish oppressors. He, instead of Don Augustin Iturbide, might have been declared its first emperor. He of all others realized the full significance of all sad words, "It might have been." Who shall judge him? Who shall say he is the more to be pitied or blamed? "We all know," says Parton, "that his life was an unhappy failure. He failed to gain the small honors at which he aimed; he failed to live a life worthy of his opportunities; he failed to achieve a character worthy of his powers. It was a great, great pity, and any one is to be pitied who, in thinking of it, has any other feelings than those of compassion—compassion for the man whose life was so much less a blessing to him than it might have been, and compassion for the country, which after producing so rare and excellent a kind of man, lost a great part of the good he might have done her."

His great lack was moral poise; had he possessed the fine ethical discrimination of Washington, he would have been invincible in any field. As it was, he made Jefferson President; he taught the Democratic party how to win; he graced the office of Vice-President as none before or since; he inaugurated the movement that landed Andrew Jackson in the Presidential chair; he gave to the West an impetus that was felt to its

farthest shore; he left to the world a rare example of cheerfulness and submission under all gradations of trial and misfortune.

It was a strange irony of fate that tinged the lives of all the principal characters concerned with the tragedy that gathered about the "Deserted Isle." Aaron Burr who played the leading part blazed like a meteor along the horizon of American history, only to have his light go out in utter darkness. Others found solace in death, but bereft of all that made existence endurable, like some lonely oak left from the forest, blasted and burned, he still lived on till he gladly welcomed the messenger that laid him low forever. Little Gamp, who was to have reigned in his stead, sought his couch in the springtime of his days to lie down and die 'neath Southern skies. Theodosia—beautiful, beloved Theodosia—sailed away on a gallant ship that never returned. Governor Alston, prostrated in mind and body with the loss of such a wife and such a son struggled on with his deep-rooted sorrow till the summer of 1816, when he died of a broken heart.

Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett, after all their buffetings and deprivations, their sufferings and sacrifices for each other, were destined to lie down in death, separated by the waters of the wide Atlantic.

The taint of birth seemed to run in the veins of all their offspring. The degenerate Dominick, after wandering about the South, was found by a friend in a state of destitution in the streets of New Orleans. A situation was secured for him in the charity hospital, but he soon after left for St. Louis, and what became of him is not known. Harman, unfortunate and enfeebled, grew old before his time. For a while he eked out an existence by means of portrait painting. His last years were spent in sickness, neglect, and poverty. His rent was paid by a friend, and he was attended by the old black servant of his mother's, who remained faithful till his death in 1854. The faithful Mary was afterward burned to death. Joseph Lewis, their youngest son and last descendant, eventually settled at Troy, Missouri. Although possessing education, he also was much dissipated. He made a pretense of practicing law, taught school, and is said to have been in the Confederate army, but died before the close of the war.

Wilkinson, the unprincipled, Wilkinson, the traitor, after the trial at Richmond, dispatched Walter Burling to Mexico to demand of the vice-king reimbursement to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars, for his alleged expenditures in counteracting the hostile plans of Burr against his majesty's dominions. His claim,

however, was treated with the contempt it deserved, and Burling was ordered to leave the country. In 1811, he was tried for complicity with Burr and for receiving bribes from Spain. Although acquitted, history has since reversed the decision. Failing in his operations against Canada, in the second war with Great Britain, he was again courtmartialed, in 1815. The specifications were not sustained, but he was discharged from the service. Ruined in fortune and reputation, he made his way to Mexico, where he died December 28th, 1825, near the city where he had plotted to conduct Burr as conqueror, twenty years before.

The Island passed into the hands of Robert Miller, of Kentucky, by a "writ of elegit" who began the cultivation of hemp and the manufacture of cordage which was then a profitable industry. In the year 1811 an unusual crop was produced, and a large quantity of the hemp was stored in one of the wings of the mansion. One very cold night as some of the slaves were returning from a visit on the Virginia side, their boat was upset, one of their number was drowned, and the others almost frozen when they reached the shore. A female servant was sent to the cellar for brandy to resuscitate them. In passing through the entrance of the hemp-room, from which

the stairway led, the candle she carried ignited the overhanging fibers. The flames made rapid headway in the light combustible material and were almost instantly beyond control. The bewildered blacks gathered around in stupid astonishment; in their amazement forgetting to awake the occupants of the main building, who barely escaped with their lives. In an hour or two, the mansion, like the hopes and dreams which once were born within its walls, was reduced to ashes.

The premises henceforth were regarded as a mere convenience in farming; the beautiful lawn with its graveled walks was turned by the plowshare. The trees left from the forest and the shrubbery nurtured by gentle hands fell a prey to the spoiler. The Island was converted into a great cornfield, and today alone exists, like the slaves who toiled there a hundred years ago, for what it produces for its masters.

We visited it a little while ago—during the last days of October. The subdued brightness of the year still lingered in the land. The dreamy haze of Indian summer again rested on valley and river, lending uncertain distance to the view, and veiling the faraway spaces in purple and mystery. In fantastic outlines rose the walls and spires of the city, grown where stood the log Court House in other days. Across the Ohio

nestled the old town of Belpre, with the iron bridge in mid-air, clinging like a spider-web between them. The willow-fringed shores had taken on a deeper tinge. The corn in the lowland was in shock. The river glinted in the sunlight, and the wooded crest in the foreground was aglow with flame. Autumn with her magic wand had once more touched, for a little season, the Island and its environment with the fleeting beauty of the olden time.

We rested and lunched in the shadow of the great trees. We drank from the old well, and reflected on the fiat that fell on this Eden, like that of long ago; on the fate that followed its dwellers from distant shores, and, at last, drove them from its gates to wander in a strange land. The cottage erected on the site of the old mansion was tenantless, and in its empty rooms had been stored piles of crimson apples and luscious pears, of enormous size, and yellow as gold, a vestige of the fruitage yielded before its desecration by ruthless hands.

A number of families live on the Island, but little effort has been made to reclaim its charm. An avenue of maples, leading toward the cottage has been planted, and the remaining trees of an earlier time have been preserved, but a baseball diamond occupies a part of the fan-shaped lawn, and unsightly bleachers have



A Picnic Party on the Island.

taken the place of rustic bowers. Two piles of stone, collected from the ruins of the pillars which once guarded the entrance to Blennerhassett's grounds, are all that is left to mark his ownership. His Island is now an outlying pleasure-ground for the city of Parkersburg, and is annually reached by many excursions from a distance, bringing picnic parties and sight-seers, who are attracted to the spot by curiosity. It is pointed out to the traveler, who passes this way, from the windows of palace cars and the guards of electric-lighted steamers. He beholds the same wide bottoms and charming view, the West Virginia hills and Ohio shore, but alike, all wear the transforming touch of time. Only the blue sky and shining river remain the same as in days gone by.

As we write, the winds of winter sweep over its deserted fields, and sigh among the old trees, that like ghosts of the past still keep unwearied vigil where youth and beauty once congregated, and love made bright the paths long since untrodden. Its flowers have withered; its beauty faded; its stately mansion mingled with the dust. Its loveliness, its glamor, its romance have all gone by. Flood and fire have swept over it; wreck and ruin have dismantled it. Its once fair bosom lies in desolation and ashes. The only reminder of the paradise that has been lost is the little

388 THE TRAGEDY OF THE DESERTED ISLE

wooded crescent lying along the upper shore, like a crown from which the glory has departed.

A curse rests on the Deserted Isle.

THE END

AFTERWORD

ON a corner shelf of our library are ranged a motley array of volumes; some short, some tall, some thick, some thin, some radiant in bright covers and gilt tops, others sadly worn and spotted with age—all companionable and eager to tell their stories of love and war, of passion and prejudice, of honor and dishonor, of evil as well as good report. To frequent reconnoissances in that corner during a protracted siege in-doors, is largely due the credit of the foregoing narrative; and while thus far refraining from burdening our pages with references, we desire before taking final exit to acknowledge our indebtedness to these worthies in motley garb.

First, to the source-books of Judge William H. Safford and Mathew L. Davis, Esq.; the former, who wrote the "Life of Blennerhassett" and edited the "Blennerhassett Papers," and the latter, who performed a similar service for Colonel Burr, under the titles: "Memoirs of Aaron Burr" and the "Private Journal of Aaron Burr." Next to these we would mention "The Life and Times of Aaron Burr," by James Parton, which although sometimes inaccurate

is by far the most interesting of Burr's biographers. "The Life of Aaron Burr," written during his lifetime by Samuel Knapp, "The True Aaron Burr," by Charles Burr Todd, and "Aaron Burr," by Henry Childs Merwin, although smaller works are also worthy of notice.

David Robbertson's report of "Burr's Trial," has already been mentioned; this with T. Carpenter's report was abridged, in 1864, by J. J. Coombs, who prefaced his compendium with a historical sketch of Burr's Western expedition. The most noteworthy histories treating of this episode are the "History of Louisiana," by Charles Gayarre, "American Domination," Henry Adams' "History of the United States," vol. 3, McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," vol. 3, "The Story of the Louisiana Purchase" and the larger "History of West Virginia," by Virgil A. Lewis, Hutchinson's "Blennerhassett and his Island," in "History of Upper Ohio Valley," Howe's "Historical Collections of Ohio," Roosevelt's "The Winning of the West," Part VI, "A History of Mississippi," by Robt. Lowry and Wm. H. McCardle, and "Historic Blennerhassett Island Home," by Alvaro F. Gibbins.

Along with the older works should be named: "Burr's Conspiracy Exposed," by General James

Wilkinson, "Proofs of the Corruption of General James Wilkinson," by Daniel Clark, Martin's "History of Louisiana," Marshall's "History of Kentucky," Pickett's "History of Alabama," Claiborne's "History of Mississippi," Monette's "History of the Mississippi Valley," Hildreth's "Pioneer History," "Travels in America," by Thomas Ashe, Hall's "Letters from the West," and the "Last of the Blennerhassetts," by the Ladies of the Five Points Mission, N. Y.

Among the noteworthy efforts of later times are: "Aaron Burr, his Personal and Political Relations with Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton," by Isaac Jenkinson, "The Glory Seekers" by William Horace Brown, "Five American Politicians," by Samuel P. Orth, and "The Aaron Burr Conspiracy," by Walter F. McCaleb, which bears evidence of more painstaking research than can be credited to any other writer on the subject. "Vanquished Victors," by Daniel Wise, contains a sketch of Burr, "Marietta Centennial Souvenir," April 7, 1888, an article on the Blennerhassetts, and "Afloat on the Ohio," now published under the title, "The Storied Ohio," by Reuben Goldthwaites, a description of the Island. An address, "Aaron Burr," by Hon. Champ Clark, may be found in "Modern Eloquence," vol. 7, and a poem and sketch, "Blennerhassett Isle," by Alice Piersol

Cain, in W. Va. State Teachers' Ass'n Souvenir, 1900.

The most voluminous author on Burrian topics in the country is Charles Felton Pidgin. Beginning with "Blennerhassett; or, the Decrees of Fate," he has added "Little Burr, the Warwick of America," the first of the series chronologically, "The Climax," a piece of imaginative construction, and is now at work on "The Great Triumvirate," to be completed in ten volumes. Mr. Pidgin is also Councilor-in-chief of the Grand Camp of the Burr Legion, which has issued "The Aaron Burr Memorial." Reference should also be made to "The Conqueror," by Gertrude Atherton, and other lives of Hamilton by Lodge, Schouler, Conant, Sumner, and O'Shea. The most recent contribution to Burr and Blennerhassett literature is, "Blennerhassett's Isle de Beau," in Archer Butler Hulbert's excellent monograph, "The Ohio River."

The older romances include: "Burton; or, the Sieges," by J. H. Ingraham, "The Rivals," by Hon. Jere Clemens, not long since issued under the title, "An American Colonel," "The Traitor," by Emerson Bennett, and "Margaret Moncrieffe, the First Love of Aaron Burr," by C. Burdett. The newer list is headed by "A Dream of Empire," by William Henry Venable. Other titles are: "The Man in the Camlet Cloak," by Carlen Bateson, "Rival Caesars," by Desmond

Dilg, and "The Stirrup Cup," by J. Aubrey Tyson.

The magazines have also contributed a generous supply of interesting articles: "The Last Days of the Blennerhassetts," Lippincott's, Feb., 1879, "A Romantic Wrong-Doer," Cosmopolitan, Oct., 1897, "Aaron Burr," Modern Culture, Feb., 1901, "The Beautiful Daughter of Aaron Burr," Ladies' Home Journal, Feb., 1901, "The True Story of Blennerhassett," Century, July, 1901, "Aaron Burr," in "Hale's Memories of a Hundred Years," Outlook Annual, Dec., 1901, "The Trial of Aaron Burr," McClure's, March, 1902, "First Love of Aaron Burr," Lippincott's, June, 1902, "The True Love of Aaron Burr," Munsey's, March to June, inclusive, 1903, "Blennerhassett's Island," Book of the Royal Blue, Nov., 1903, "Decisive Battles of the Law," Harper's, June, 1906, "History of Blennerhassett," (Hutchinson's) Parkersburg State Journal, May 21, 1906, "Unpublished Letters of Blennerhassett," Parkersburg Sentinel, Aug. 10, 1903. The "Romance of Aaron Burr," beginning in Pearson's, June, 1906, is just completed in the May number, 1907.

The above includes a wide range, and trusting that those who may elect to pursue the subject further will find the field an interesting one, we now—as we boys used to say—will give way for an abler speaker.

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